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#eHW15: The Future of Data Security?



eHealth Week Riga - Day Two: Ministerial Session – Privacy and Data Protection in Healthcare

There cannot be a congress on eHealth without a look at data security. Several serious recent medical data breaches in the US have highlighted the risks facing electronic information. The FBI has been quoted as saying that that whereas two years ago there were two breaches a week, now there are at least two a day.

“An important element in the data issue is preservation of confidence in medical services. How can we secure use of data and at the same time how to protect data?” said Alberto De Felice, Health Vice Chair, American Chamber of Commerce to the EU.

In the EU, eMedical records are accessible across the bloc to varying degrees but there is no standardisation on data protection. De Felice suggested five steps, based on experience in the US, to enable best data protection in the EU.

A law applicable to all member states, standards on interoperability, enabling citizens access to their data, use of anonymised data and establishing the right balance between protecting data and enabling innovation.

Christos N. Schizas, Professor of Computational Intelligence, University of Cyprus, was optimistic about the future of the security of medical data. “I’ve been speaking at eHealth week for three years. Every year things are getting scarier but also better,” he said. “As long as the good guys are a few steps ahead of bad guys we are in good shape.” Schizas hinted that there was no way back. “We either have an electronic health record or go back to the old system and have no record at all.”

Dai Davis, Percy Crow Davis & Co., on the other hand was more sceptical. He asked if it was even possible to make laws for cyber security and if medical data could be kept confidential. “I don’t trust my mobile devices but most people do. When you transfer that to medical records you have a problem,” he said.

Source: eHealth Week 2015

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