

Telemedicine Newsletter

Issue 2, June 2007

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AIDS Conference: 3rd SA AIDS Conference, 5-8 June 2007

The conference, which took place on the 5th to the 8th of June, was categorized into five different tracks: Track 1: Basic and Clinical Sciences, Track 2: Epidemiology, Prevention & Public Health, Track 3: Social and Economic Sciences, Human Rights and Ethics, Track 4: Best Practices and Track 5: Community Track. Even though three categories, Track 2, 4 and 5 were the most relevant to the work we conduct at the Telemedicine Unit, it seemed beneficial to attend other sessions. The conference was a good balance of debates and formal discussions which stimulated interesting comments from the panel and the audience. The conference also had exhibitions in which some of the organizations that are active in the work of HIV and AIDS provided information on their work. One session titled “25 years from now...Will AIDS be the face of South Africa?” captured the events that are unique to South Africa and looked at the dynamics of the past 25 years and the lessons we could learn as a country.

Some of the sessions focused on the Impact of Interventions. A presentation that would likely inform the work the Telemedicine unit conducts with regards to interventions in health care services looked at the impact of AIDS on health services in Gauteng province. This study indicated how patients with non-HIV/AIDS illnesses were being shadowed by those with HIV/AIDS illnesses in the health services, thus limiting their time spent in health facilities and even their basic access to health care services. Another presentation that seemed relevant was one on Human Resource challenges for expanded HIV prevention and AIDS treatment services. This presentation also focused on how resources in health facilities were diverted to HIV and

AIDS while other health concerns were neglected. The presentation alerted the audience on the importance of seeking innovative ways to address human resource challenges. An area in which telemedicine is embarking on numerous initiatives.

Department of Health Budget Speech, Parliament

The National Department of Health requested that the Telemedicine Workstation developed by the Medical Research Council and the University of Stellenbosch be exhibited at the Department of Health Budget Speech on the 7th June 2007. Dr Khotu was very impressed with our system and assisted us tremendously by helping to demonstrate the system to interested persons.

During the budget speech a special mention was given to telemedicine by the Deputy Minister of Health, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge. After the budget speech the Minister of Health, Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang visited our exhibition and the system was demonstrated to her. The Minister was extremely impressed and supported the roll-out of the initiative.



MEC Health KZN, **Mrs NP Nkonyeni**; Minister of Health **Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang**; Director Telemedicine (MRC), **Dr Moretlo Molefi**; Telemedicine Project Manager (MRC), **Ms Jill Fortuin – Abrahams**.

Telemedicine Delegation visits Soweto on June 16th

A delegation of Chinese Telemedicine engineers, an intern from the United States and MRC staff visited the township of Soweto on June 16th to better understand the history of Youth Day and the struggles of the anti-apartheid movement. Along with visiting the homes of Archbishop Tutu and Nelson Mandela, the group learned about the history of the Regina Mundi Church. The visit ended at the Hector Pieterse Museum where the group met Hector Pieterse's sister who was visiting in honor of Youth Day. The tour proved inspiring as the delegation was able to see the

struggles and triumphs of South Africa's political past as well as understand some of the current disparities, especially in health related areas. Cultural understanding has proved to be incredibly important to successful tele-medicine program implementation, and thus the visit provided delegates with a deeper historical and social perspective on the current situation.

Ashley Bess

Ashley Bess has recently graduated with a Degree in Business Administration, and he has been appointed as Research Assistant within the Telemedicine unit. The main focus area of his position will be database management and to provide support for telemedicine researchers. Ashley will also be responsible for disseminating telemedicine information and creating awareness about telemedicine.



Conferences, Courses and Training Opportunities



12th ISfTeH International Conference
Chennai, India
(02.11. - 03.11.2007)



2007 ATA Mid Year Meeting – 17 & 18 September 2007
<http://www.americantelemed.org/conf/Mid-Year%202007/opener.htm>