



# Personal Health It's your responsibility...

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There's a lot of Buzz out there about Personal Health Records, access to information (too much or too little), individual empowerment, just to mention a few in the litany.

In the meantime we're still trying to figure out the differences between the Personal Health Record, the Electronic Medical Record and the Electronic Health Record not to even mention who owns what. It's much easier to call the whole thing "eHealth" and let it go at that. Folk of my ilk, who have spent their careers pursuing this Holy Grail, can claim a rather large victory – we were right after all!

We have the technology, we have the funding, we have the political will, we have the passion and we have the sanction and support of the public media – the only thing that we're in short supply of is people like "us". The way that I figure it, we have a rather huge responsibility to deliver the vision and not an abundance of human resources to do so.

Which brings me to my first point – your health is your responsibility.

So, how are you doing? Are you well-rested, have a balanced life, getting the exercise, nutrition, and diversity that you need to be physically and mentally healthy? My guess is that your answer is a blushing yet proud "no, I'm too busy, and I'm in Healthcare IT".

Right – chances are that you're adrenalin junky on the road to mental exhaustion and burn out.

Disconnect and have a life – you'll be much more competent in the decisions you make, the quality of the work you do, and build on your sustainability over what promises to be a very long haul. Believe it or not, your vocation will survive even if you're not online 24/7, despite the possibility of your ego taking a beating.

That's where health is truly your responsibility, no information technology, PHR, EMR, EHR involved – just common sense and acting responsibly.

If you don't, the way I hear it, you get into the "other" stuff – real health problems, the ones that we're

committed to help solve. Things like depression, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and a host of others.

Collectively, we should have a huge concern about delivering on our vision and proving its value in tangible terms. As we all know, healthcare is not perceived by the public with logic; it's looked upon with emotion. We are spending billions on creating the infrastructure to support eHealth at a time when the demand for basic services and access is at an all-time high. That's a rough climate for healthcare providers, politicians and consumers to maintain faith without overwhelming successes. We've seen the impact of that climate in spades as the physician community embraces the EMR with varying degrees of passion.

Being a bit of a consumer myself, and knowing more than I should, I dwell occasionally on an IT decision that (in my mind) was ill-advised and calculate how many hip replacements those funds would have paid for, how many MRI's that would have been done earlier.. well, you know what I'm driving at.

Back to the point, we can't afford to fail – we've sold the concept, extolled its virtues, and created the expectations. Now it's up to us to be accountable - to honour our responsibilities.

I'm still waiting for the post-mortem on the UK's small dilemma with their eHealth project. ●