HiMSS 2017: Tackling the Challenges Ahead

This year's [HIMSS conference](#) came at an interesting inflection point in the health care world. A new Administration started just a few weeks before the conference. Speculation was abound in the lead up to the event, with one question looming, "Would policy conversations dominate?" After all, any changes to the [Affordable Care Act](#)would have a drastic impact on health IT. And what about the vast minutia of health IT policies? What is the future of [meaningful use](#)? Will there be changes to [FHIR standards](#)? Is the shift from [volume to value-based](#) care at risk? All these and more lingered on the minds of conference attendees.

The conference opened with this powerful advice from [HiMSS North America Chair, Michael Zaroukian](#) to "use the emotions inside us, to meet the challenges outside us." and as it turned out, the thousands of vendors and industry stakeholders did just that as they focused on innovation and patient outcomes. Here are our takeaways:

Data Security-Still Top of Mind: With a record breaking number of health care data security incidents in 2016, it's natural that protecting personal information was a key concern among participants. The buzzword this year? [Blockchain](#).

Interoperability-Close But No Cigar: The government has been pushing interoperability standards for years and vendors have been responsive, though it's clear from this year's conference that [work remains to be done](#).

Patient engagement-Still the Holy Grail: Patient Engagement has been described as the "blockbuster drug of the 21st century." At CNSI, we think there's some truth to that as demonstrated with the Michigan Medicaid [myHealthButton App](#).

It's an exciting time to be in health IT and it was great to start the year off with the infectious spirit of HiMSS. We look forward to the innovations that will drive the industry forward in 2017.