




A Monthly e-Newsletter From:

 Institute for Alternative Futures

April 2006

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Intriguing Ideas

Intriguing Ideas

[Biomonitoring Technologies Help Reduce Health Disparities](#)

Biomonitoring Technologies Help Reduce Health Disparities

In its first meeting April 5, the Biomonitoring Futures Project advisory board identified four promising biomonitoring technologies that will help prevent and manage chronic disease and reduce health disparities for the poor and underserved.

[Health Disparities Research to Probe Promising Areas for Health Gains](#)

The Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) organized the [Biomonitoring Futures Project](#) to identify trends in emerging biomonitoring technologies and how those emerging technologies can reduce health disparities. This biomonitoring research also will support the Disparity Reducing Advances Project, IAF's multi-year, multi-stakeholder project to identify and accelerate advances that can reduce disparities in healthcare. (See next story.)

Emerging Issues

The advisors identified four promising opportunities: continuous, passive biomonitoring for healthy living and prevention; indwelling closed loop insulin pump and biomonitoring system; blood as a platform for early detection of cancer and screening; and the use of biomonitoring to change behavior, upstream, at the community and national level.

[Innovations in Business Models Rely on Collaboration](#)

The potential for continuous, passive monitoring is exciting. New technologies are available for home use that can monitor mobility, sleep patterns and general activity. They can monitor patients with chronic disease and the elderly and help them "age-in-place" in their homes. Passive monitoring that is communicated to care givers can alert care givers to events, such as falls and their severity.

Shared Learning

[IAF Shares Knowledge at World Future Society](#)

Continuous, passive monitors can be worn as personal devices to monitor physiological parameters such as motion, body heat, heart rate, and breath rate. Using sophisticated algorithms, these parameters can provide useful information such as energy expenditure. Combined with software for health coaching, these monitors can improve health and help manage diseases such as diabetes. Continuous monitoring will potentially lead to new understanding of how to slow disease progression in individuals, given their particular conditions.

Upcoming Events:

An indwelling closed loop insulin pump is one of the most promising technologies for reducing health disparities in diabetes. Such a device, if available to underserved populations, would improve the management of diabetes and reduce complications.

Shaping Pharma's Future: Influencing the New Business Models, IAF President Jonathan Peck, [PBIRG 2006 Annual General Meeting](#), May 22, Aventura, Fla.

Devices for screening and early detection are a priority for reducing disparities in cancer. Researchers are aggressively looking into ways to assess genes and proteins in the blood. This research is at an early stage and incredibly complex, but it could be extremely significant if these devices can be used to identify and routinely monitor indicators of precancerous conditions, or enable better treatment of established cancers.

Caldwell Lecture, IAF President Jonathan Peck, 2006 American Roentgen Ray Society Annual Meeting, May 3, Vancouver, Canada.

The fourth priority is linking data from individual biomonitors as well as community health monitoring to identify opportunities to support healthy behavior changes. For example, communities could use this aggregated data to make the community more activity friendly.

The Implications of Future Trends on Cancer Care, IAF Founder Clem Bezold at the Seminar on "The Future of Oncology: Cancer Care in 2015", [International Union Against Cancer \(UICC\) World Cancer Congress](#), July 11, Washington, DC.

Keep an eye on this newsletter for the final report for the Biomonitoring Futures Project and more information on these four key opportunities. The Biomonitoring Futures Project is funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Health Disparities Research to Probe Promising Areas for Health Gains

Wiser Futures: Using Futures Tools to Understand and Create the Future. IAF futurists reprise this popular [preconference workshop](#). World Futures Society Annual Conference, July 28, Toronto. See story on other IAF sessions below.

At their first meeting for the Disparity Reducing Advances (DRA) Project April 6, the project partners picked three promising areas likely to lead to important health gains for the poor and underserved. They want IAF to do futures research on advances in community education to prevent disease, cell phone technology for health promotion, and consumer navigational support for health and health care.

The [DRA Project](#) is IAF's multi-year, multi-stakeholder project to identify and accelerate advances that can reduce disparities in healthcare.

Educating communities is the best way to prevent health disparities before they occur.

Communities need to focus on creating healthy environments. Changes in the environment can promote physical activity, reduce stress, and improve mental health. The IAF research will look at communities as systems and identify the best ways to make health information and practices more accessible for everyone.

Cell phone technology has great potential to reduce health disparities. Unlike computers and internet connections, there is little or no digital divide for cell phones. New third generation cell phones will also provide broadband access. Cell phones could be used as a way to reach patients with test results, check-up reminders, and health information. The cell phone could also be an ideal platform for biomonitoring and health coaching. The cell phone may relay information from other personal biomonitors or serve as a biomonitor itself. Leveraging the cell phone to reduce health disparities would include creating content that is culturally appropriate and available in multiple languages.

Improving the ability of underserved populations to navigate the healthcare system is vital to reducing health disparities. This will become even more important as medical technology becomes more complex and people become more involved in directing their own care.

Communities have different navigational needs, but there is a universal need for common definitions and ways to share best practices among the different types of navigators now found in the healthcare system. New technologies could also assist existing navigators and

empower patients to navigate the healthcare system themselves.

A complete report of the meeting will be available on IAF's website in June. IAF would like to thank our founding sponsor, the National Cancer Institute's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities and our sponsor, Florida Hospital. We also thank a second new founding sponsor, the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ) and new sponsor, the University of Texas Medical Branch. For more information or to join the DRA Project, contact Craig Bettles, cbettles@altfutures.com,

Emerging Issues

Innovations in Business Models Rely on Collaboration

In an April Business Week article reporting on an IBM survey of CEOs and government leaders, IBM Chairman Samuel J. Palmisano called business model innovation the "holy grail of strategic thinking" that differentiates businesses far more than product or process innovation. Many IAF clients have come to the same conclusion after exploring the future and realizing their business models are not sustainable in a changing environment.

IBM believes collaboration is essential to becoming a unique enterprise in a global world. [See article.](#) "We would agree that once people understand how interconnected our world has become, they discover that collaboration can create a new and sustainable business model," said Marsha Rhea, IAF senior futurist.

Collaboration will define the future business model in very diverse organizations. Associations have always depended on their ability to bring individuals and organizations together to meet common needs. Now facilitating collaboration among members is becoming a defining competency. IAF is working with associations to increase their ability to convene collaborative learning communities where individuals can join together to create new knowledge. "Collaborative learning communities could transform the conferences and publications that are the basis of most association business models and create new levels of engagement that make membership more attractive," she said.

Innovation is moving into a collaborative business model as well. Technology innovation networks can overcome geographic and organizational boundaries. Instead of relying on internal research and development capabilities, more companies are tapping into a global network of collaborators to compete in a complex global economy.

Innovations in government are also stemming from a new priority for collaboration. Last year the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Region embraced a more collaborative identity for its future and chose two of its five audacious goals to demonstrate a new way of doing forest service business. The Eastern Region intends to protect large ecosystems across boundaries by working with internal and external partners. The leaders recognized they would be using creative new approaches to expand the amount of national forest system land managed for public benefit. They also set an audacious goal of connecting citizens to the land. By working with citizen volunteers and public and private partners, they hope to achieve a threefold increase in the work the forest service can do to achieve conservation.

IAF's for-profit subsidiary, Alternative Futures Associates, has worked with more than one pharmaceutical company that is morphing from drug to health company. They are seeking new partnerships to build relationships with researchers, healthcare providers, communities and patients. When their business model shifts to creating health, they enter a complex ecosystem of individual, community and global factors. No company can pursue health without collaboration.

Shared Learning

IAF Shares Knowledge at World Future Society

IAF will share insights about reducing health disparities and promoting anticipatory learning and will teach our futures methodologies at the World Future Society annual conference July 27-30 in Toronto.

In a special event on education, Saturday, July 29 at 9 a.m., IAF Futurist Marsha Rhea will lead a dialogue on integrating anticipatory learning strategies into all aspects of elementary and secondary schools. Joining her as speakers will be Chris Lowry, coordinator for the Toronto Business Alliance for a Local Living Economy, and Mary Ghikas, senior associate executive director for the American Library Association.

IAF Futurists Clem Bezold and Bill Rowley will share the exciting range of possibilities on the horizon for health care, including the potential for reducing health disparities. This session will be Saturday, July 29 at 2 p.m. Bezold and Rowley will share IAF's current research on cancer, diabetes, biomedical research, and health disparity reduction.

Bezold will join in a panel from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Sunday, July 30 comparing corporate foresight in Europe and the US. European futurists from ZPunkt, and corporate planners and foresight officers from BASF, Johnson and Johnson, and Philips Design will compare the use and effectiveness of foresight in corporate settings.

IAF will reprise its popular Wiser Futures workshop on using its futures tools to create a preferred future. This one-day preconference workshop will be Friday, July 28 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is a highly interactive learning experience where participants experience the tools we describe. Registration for the Wiser Futures workshop is at <http://www.wfs.org/2006regform.htm>.

For the preliminary program for WorldFuture 2006: Creating Global Strategies for Humanity's Future, go to the [WFS website](#).

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