




A Monthly e-Newsletter From:

 Institute for Alternative Futures

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Upcoming Events:

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.

Wiser Futures: Using Futures Tools to Understand and Create the Future. IAF futurists reprise this popular [preconference workshop](#). To register for this one day session, sign up for preconference course C-7. World Future Society Annual Conference, July 28, Toronto.

Anticipatory Learning Strategies for Schools. IAF Senior Futurist Marsha Rhea moderator [World Future Society Annual Conference](#), July 29, Toronto.

The Future of Healthcare and the Paths to Eliminating Health Disparities. IAF Futurists Clem Bezold and Bill Rowley. [World Future Society Annual Conference](#), July 29, Toronto.

Corporate Foresight: Comparing US and European Experience. IAF Founder Clem Bezold, futurists from Z-Punkt The Foresight Company, and corporate futurist & planners from BASF, Philips, and J&J. [World Future Society Annual Conference](#), July 29, Toronto.

IAF Holds 116th Foresight Seminar on the Looming Diabetes Crisis

In 1978, IAF began its Foresight Seminars on Health Innovation, focused on congressional staff and policy makers. This June, IAF held its 116th Foresight Seminar on The Looming Diabetes Crisis: Can it be Prevented? The seminar, supported by an educational grant from Novo Nordisk, focused on the startling rise in diabetes and the factors leading to this rise.

"If America does not respond effectively, future generations will be less healthy and shorter lived," IAF Senior Futurist William Rowley remarked at the outset of the Seminar. "Unless something is done to stop the twin health epidemics of diabetes and obesity, the number of deaths attributed to diabetes will triple and the cost of diabetes will double to \$351 billion by 2025."

Throughout the seminar, the conversation returned to the importance of prevention and management. The panel urged lawmakers to begin a national dialogue on strategies to prevent the looming crisis of type II diabetes and to improve the health system's management of both type I and II diabetes.

Dr. William Rowley highlighted the incredible human and economic toll of type II diabetes and discussed the findings in IAF's report on Diabetes and Obesity 2025: Four Future Scenarios for the Twin Health Epidemics. The scenarios identify ten factors critical to stopping the twin epidemics of diabetes and obesity: prevention, screening, behavior modification, management of chronic disease, empowered self-care, advances in technology, personalized medicine, access to care, obesogenic environment and the social determinants of health. Dr. Rowley made the case that progress must be made on all ten of these factors for our society to halt the twin epidemics in diabetes and obesity. The full report, also sponsored by Novo Nordisk, is available on IAF's website. Click [here](#) to download the full report.

Dr. Francine Kaufman highlighted the differences between type I and type II diabetes and described the shocking growth of pediatric type II diabetes in her clinical practice. Dr. Kaufman is one of the nation's foremost pediatric endocrinologists and the author of *Diabetes: The Obesity-Diabetes Epidemic That Threatens America—And What We Must Do to Stop It*. Dr. Kaufman's presentation also showed images of the toll that diabetes inflicts on children in her clinic and the difficulties that diabetic children face as they grow into adulthood.

Tom Boyer, the executive director of the Diabetes Care Coalition, called on law makers to increase government support for the prevention and management of diabetes. He focused his comments on the inadequate amount of government support given to prevention activities, patient education and disease management of diabetes compared to other diseases. Mr. Boyer also highlighted the disparities in the prevalence and care of diabetes among underserved populations.

R. Stewart Perry highlighted the growing problem of diabetes and the inadequacy of the healthcare system to deal with this crisis. Mr. Perry commented on how health systems, including Medicare and Medicaid, provide perverse incentives for diabetes care and management. They will pay for the costly complications of diabetes such as kidney transplants, but will rarely pay for effective prevention and disease management. Mr. Perry also highlighted the importance of early detection and effective management of diabetes. Mr. Perry is the Vice Chair of the National Board of Directors of the American Diabetes Association (ADA).

"Preventing the growth of type II diabetes is a monumental challenge that will require not only action on the national level, but at the state and local level as well. The shocking growth of diabetes projected over the next decade will require us to change how we structure lives and communities and how we care for those with the disease," Dr. Rowley concluded at the end of the seminar. A full summary of the Foresight Seminar will be available online at <http://www.altfutures.com/foresight.asp> next week. This website also contains information on the foresight seminars as well as summaries of previous foresight seminars.

AHRQ Joins the DRA Project as a Founding Sponsor

IAF is building a network to tackle the difficult problem of health equity through its Disparities Reducing Advances (DRA) Project. The DRA Project is a multi-year, multi-stakeholder project designed to identify the most promising advances for bringing health gains to the poor and underserved, and accelerating the development and deployment of these advances to reduce disparities.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has joined the DRA Project as a founding sponsor.* The National Cancer Institute's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities is also a founding sponsor. The Florida Hospital, the University of Texas Medical Branch and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are also sponsors of the DRA Project. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has provided a grant for a related project focused on using biomonitoring to reduce disparities.

Over the summer, IAF is exploring seven potential advances to reduce health disparities. In September, IAF will be holding the second Partners' meeting to consider promising advances and the opportunities for accelerating their development and effective deployment. Further information on the Disparity Reducing Advances Project and the Biomonitoring Futures Project are available online at www.altfutures.com/DRA and www.altfutures.com/BFP respectively. We are looking for additional organizations committed to reducing health disparities and willing to work with the DRA Project. To join the DRA Project, contact Craig Bettles, cbettles@altfutures.com, 703-684-5880.

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Always Connected, Always Learning at Any Age

E-learning is helping people of all ages become digital natives who are adept at learning collaboratively in an ever more complex world.

Digital natives live in a multi-channel, highly personalized yet highly social environment. Learning technologist Marc Prensky coined the term digital native several years ago to explain to educators how differently young people learn from their elders. The pervasive use of the Internet, phones, personal digital assistants and gaming will transform not only the classroom, but lifelong learning as well.

E-learning technologies make it possible for the learners to co-design and co-create their learning experiences. The list of powerful e-learning technologies is growing well beyond the online courses. E-learning has expanded to include chat, podcasting, wikis and blogs, gaming and simulations.

Speaking at a recent e-learning conference at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, Dr. Chris Dede, Harvard Graduate School of Education, said research shows that media shapes learning styles. People of every age have different styles and preferences which extend to their use of media for learning.

Also speaking at the conference, Prensky said digital natives quickly take in more information. Instead of operating at a conventional speed, they move at twitch speed. Instead of learning step-by-step, they like random access. They take connectivity for granted, prefer parallel processing to linear processing and are quite comfortable maintaining constant partial attention. Prensky said learning in these environments feels like play. Getting people engaged in learning may be more important than the content, which will change. If people are engaged, they will want to learn throughout their lives.

Learning can be effectively compressed into learning nuggets that are available across different channels, according to Jeanne Meister, another conference speaker. Work and learning are blurring as consumer electronics make wearable training possible. She described how Capital One uses podcasts to offer nuggets from corporate courses and other learning content. She forecast that instant messaging will snowball as people discover this is the most efficient way to network and tap into virtual coaches and mentors.

Learning is finding its way into random free moments. The cellphone has edged out PC game sales over the past five years, according to Doug Whatley, CEO of Breakaway Games. "People are finding you only need a cellphone to play a fun game. It's something you do while waiting in line."

As more organizations become global, they are finding that they cannot support a classroom environment for professional development and training. The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is one organization that has turned to e-learning. DAU President Frank Anderson Jr. described the U.S. military's turn to e-learning as the only way to have the reach and speed to overcome the barriers of time, space and location.

Gaming and simulations are proving to be powerful technologies for teaching people to collaborate, developing higher order thinking skills, and moving effective decision making into the field. Next month Alternative Futures will look at how simulations are being used to teach sophisticated inquiry and to make sense out of complexity.

IAF Internship Program Reaches Out to Next Generation

IAF continues to recruit top talent in its year-round internship program with four interns joining us this summer.

Takuya Murata is working towards his masters at the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies, directed by Jim Dator. He is interning under Clement Bezold, IAF's Founder and Chairman of the Board. Mr. Murata is providing research assistance with the Disparity Reducing Advances (DRA) Project among others. Mr. Murata will return to Honolulu this fall to complete his studies.

Devin Fidler is a recent graduate of the Budapest University of Economic Science and Public Administration with a Masters in Business Administration. He has previous work experience at the US Chamber of Commerce, the Scottish Council Foundation and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Mr. Fidler is interning under the direction of IAF's Senior Futurist, Dr. William Rowley. He is currently assisting in the development of scenarios for avian flu as well as conducting research on cardiovascular disease and alternative fuels.

Christopher Rosenkrans is currently conducting independent and directed research under an academic program at Boston University. He is interning under the direction of IAF President Jonathan Peck. Mr. Rosenkrans is currently working on IAF's most recent Foresight Seminar as well as conducting research into cardiovascular disease.

Lex Kiefhaber is currently attending Yale University. He is interning under the direction of IAF's Senior Futurist Marsha Rhea. Mr. Kiefhaber has assisted in numerous projects at IAF including IAF's most recent Foresight Seminar and the Disparity Reducing Advances Project. He will be returning to his studies at Yale in the fall.

IAF's intern program seeks graduate and undergraduate students who can learn quickly, write well, and want to learn about futures techniques and foresight applied to create better futures. For information on the IAF internship program and opportunities this fall or in 2007, contact Craig Bettles, cbettles@alfutures.com.

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