

## MRI Calls for Health Mobile Phone Organization



By Neil Versel

**August 26, 2008** | Taking another next step toward promoting the utility of mobile phones in health-IT, the Boston-based [Medical Records Institute](#) (MRI) is calling on other organizations and companies to join a new membership-based organization.

Launched this week, the [Center for Cell Phone Applications in Healthcare](#), or C-PAHC, seeks to be an international advocate for development of dissemination of health care-related technologies for cell phones and other handheld mobile devices.

"We really believe that this is the big thing to happen in the next five years," says MRI chief executive C. Peter Waegemann, who is serving as executive director of the new organization. "We think it will be bigger than anything else."

Waegemann made similar pronouncements in May at the annual [Towards the Electronic Patient Record](#) (TEPR) conference when he kicked off an eight-month project to prove the worthiness of cell phones as conduits for consumer-focused interoperability in health care. (See ["TEPR Predicts Cell Phone PHRs."](#)) "The TEPR one is just the beginning," Waegemann now tells *Digital HealthCare & Productivity*.

In an [article](#) posted on the C-PAHC site, Waegemann identifies 11 health care applications for cell phones that could be widely available by the end of 2009, including the transmission of insurance information, point-of-care clinical documentation, and mobile computing for emergency medical services. "The point is that every ambulance now uses basic phones," Waegemann says of the latter. "In the future, new software with simple question trees will make things very different."

Waegemann envisions the new center to help members sort through legal issues and perhaps set standards for mobile health-IT, in much the way of a trade association. He says it is the "natural successor" to a previous MRI spin-off, the the Mobile Healthcare Alliance (MoHCA).

"MoHCA was a little bit ahead of its time," Waegemann says. "We think the time is now." The former director of MoHCA, Claudia Tessier, now is vice president of the Medical Records Institute, and will have a significant role in C-PAHC, Waegemann says.

The idea of cell phones as a hub of interoperability goes well beyond the borders of the United States. (See ["Mobile Medicine for the Developing World."](#)) "All of this is going international," says Waegemann, a native of Germany. "It's going to go international and it's going to go very fast."

The launch comes little more than a month after [Apple](#) opened its [iPhone App Store](#) for third-party applications for its red-hot iPhone. Among the first batch of products offered is a new version of the [Epocrates](#) drug reference (see ["Epocrates Coming to an iPhone Near You."](#)), which has become the second-ranked health care and fitness title in the App Store.

Epocrates marketing vice president Michelle Snyder tells *Digital HealthCare & Productivity* that she was surprised by the heavy consumer interest in the mobile drug database.

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