



Joseph C. Kvedar, M.D.
Vice President
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Digital health is poised at a critical moment in its evolution and Canada is better positioned than the U.S. to move digital health solutions into the mainstream.

That's the contention of Dr. Joseph Kvedar, who will be providing the closing plenary address at this year's e-health conference, based on more than two decades of observing the evolution of digital health and health technology.

Dr. Kvedar has excellent credentials on which to base his analysis, as a long-term innovator and commentator on health information technology issues. Dr. Kvedar, is vice president at Connected Health, Partners Healthcare which has launched a number of innovative health tracking programs, mobile health, and virtual care initiatives for the more patients served at Partners Healthcare-affiliated hospitals including Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital.

He is past President and board member of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and past Chair of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Task Force on Telemedicine.

Dr. Kvedar also [blogs](#) regularly digital health issues such as virtual visits and wearables in health and in 2015 published "The Internet of Healthy Things", a book describing the huge amount of data captured by every day objects and how these data can be used to ultimately change behavior to improve health.

In a recent e-Health Conference interview, Dr. Kvedar said "it's a rubber hits the road time for digital health" right now. He said the time is over for convincing people that care can be delivered a different way using digital health tools and people are now saying "we could and should" do this.

"I see Canada as farther ahead on this general area," he said, because there is a "natural tendency to value getting things done over wide geographies" which technology facilitates, and because health care is funded centrally in Canada "there is more opportunity to pull policy levers that affect the whole population."

Having moved beyond need to persuade people of the value of digital approaches to health, Dr. Kvedar said the issues to be dealt with now involve implementation challenges for both patients and providers.

"We have yet to find the core three or four things that will make patient and consumers want this kind of access to health care and also create an opportunity for health care providers to not see it as just one more thing that is going to drag them down."

Dr. Kvedar said his organization is taking a whole different approach to design to make the patient encounter more engaging, fun and "stickier". He also said more needs to be done for physicians to integrate digital health solutions into their regular workflow so they are not creating the sorts of administrative burden seen with many electronic record systems.

Dr. Kvedar spoke highly of the Centre for Global eHealth Innovation in Toronto and the work done by centre lead Dr. Joseph Cafazzo for also taking a patient-centric approach to digital health.

Asked to comment on the hottest issue at this year's Health Information Management Systems Society conference in Orlando - the world's biggest gathering on health IT issues, Dr. Kvedar noted artificial intelligence (AI) is "red hot" in the health sector.

Ironically, his comments came the same week, the Ontario and federal governments announced creation of the Vector Institute at the University of Toronto to explore potential uses for AI in areas such as health.

Dr. Joseph Kvedar at the 2017 e-Health Conference:

Presentation:
Harnessing the Internet of Healthy Things

Time & Location: June 7, 2017 | 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Exhibit Hall A, North Building, Metro Toronto
Convention Centre