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Dr. Arthur Leibowitz Delivers 10th Annual Raymond C. Grandon Lecture

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Dr. Arthur Leibowitz Delivers 10th Annual Raymond C. Grandon Lecture

On Thursday, May 10th Arthur "Abbie" N. Leibowitz, MD, FAAP, Executive Vice President of Digital Health Strategy and Business Development for Medscape, Inc., delivered the 10th Annual Raymond C. Grandon Lecture in DePalma Auditorium on the campus of Thomas Jefferson University. The lecture was entitled "E-Commerce: What is Ahead for Healthcare?" and was attended by over 200 persons across many sectors of Thomas Jefferson University, the Health System, and the region's medical community. The morning-long program also featured three Jefferson Faculty Panel Reactors: Edward W. Tawyea, MSLS, Director of Academic Information Services and Research; Marvin V. Gozum, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine, Jefferson Medical College; and Hal Augustine, Chief Information Officer, Jefferson Health System.

As it has in the past, the Office of Health Policy and Clinical Outcomes (OHP) facilitated the lecture. The Office's Director and Associate Dean of Jefferson Medical College, David B. Nash, MD, MBA, introduced the speaker's many accomplishments. Dr. Leibowitz started his medical career in private pediatric practice but left in 1987 to join U.S. Healthcare as a Regional Medical Director. After the merger with Aetna, Dr. Leibowitz became Chief Medical Officer of the combined company and responsible for medical policy, clinical management programs, technology assessment, and quality improvement. Dr. Leibowitz left Aetna U.S. Healthcare in October 2000 to join Medscape as Executive Vice President of Digital Health Strategy and Business Development. He leads the company's data group, dedicated to demonstrating the value of electronic medical records systems in clinical practice.

Dr. Leibowitz used the products and services of his corporation, Medscape, Inc., as well his clinical and management background, to discuss a wide range of issues associated with e-commerce and healthcare. Some of the major themes included the development of the Internet as a tool of medical practice, the protection of privacy in health technology, and the various business models of e-health enterprises. What seemed to be of most interest, however, was Dr. Leibowitz's thorough review of the values and challenges of establishing an electronic medical records system. As an advocate of the new technology, Dr. Leibowitz told the audience that an electronic medical records system can improve patient safety, reduce medical costs, and ultimately improve the quality of care. He also described some specific applications such as easy enrollment in disease management programs and the quick identification of patients for a clinical trial. He further encouraged the integration of such a system with Internet-based practice guidelines and health information, hand held systems, and large information databases. According to Dr. Leibowitz, currently 69,140 clinicians are using such a system covering over 17 million patient records.

In the question and answer and faculty reactor sections of the program, attendees and panelists expressed a great deal of interest in Dr. Leibowitz's work but also several reservations about electronic medical records particularly relating to privacy, training, feasibility, and physician patient relationships. Clearly the topic is one that will foster significant debate and discussion in the medical community in the coming years.

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The lecture was funded through a gift by Raymond Charles Grandon, MD, JMC '45. A renowned internist, Dr. Grandon is a former President of the Pennsylvania Medical Society and has served the state of Pennsylvania and the nation's medical community in a variety of advisory and regulatory capacities over the course of his long career. Currently Dr. Grandon is the president of Central Pennsylvania Chapter of the Jefferson Medical College Alumni Association and a member of the Office of Health Policy Advisory Board. Planning for the 11th Annual Lecture has already begun, as the Office hopes to build on this year's success.

About the Author

Jonathan Grieb is the Duke University Summer Intern at the Office of Health Policy and Clinical Outcomes, Thomas Jefferson University.