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## President Says Electronic Medical Records Will Cut Costs


### *Bush Pushes 2nd-Term Agenda In Ohio*

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**CLEVELAND** -- President George W. Bush was in Cleveland Thursday for a discussion at the Cleveland Clinic about health care information technology. He was promoting his second-term agenda for computerizing medical records.

#### Video





 [Bush Stresses Need For Computerized Records](#)



He arrived at about 10:30 a.m. He waved as he descended from Air Force One.

He also shook hands with and met T.J. Powell. Bush recognized him for serving 1,000 hours a year with the Northeast Ohio Medical Reserve Corps.

Bush told the hospital audience that patient choices would lead to cost controls.

 **SLIDESHOW:** [Bush In Cleveland](#)  
 **VISIT:** [Why Cleveland?](#)

"The more choices people have in health care, the more likely it is that costs will be under control," Bush said.

Bush encouraged small-business owners to make use of tax-advantaged health care savings accounts to pay for medical costs. "This is a way to afford health care for your employees," Bush said.

Bush acknowledged Ohio Gov. Bob Taft in the audience and said the last time he saw Taft "he was dancing on stage at the inaugural ceremony." Bush began his second term on Jan. 20.

About one dozen anti-war protesters stood one block from the hospital main entrance and held banners that read "End the U.S. occupation of Iraq! Bring the troops home now. Money for jobs, health care, not for war!" One protester held an effigy of Bush with a Grim Reaper-style sickle and an image of an Abu Ghraib prisoner with the message, "Got democracy?"

Sharon Pacione, 59, of suburban Cleveland, said she considered the visit by Bush a display of White House arrogance because she felt Bush had stolen the election in Ohio.

"I actually consider this an arrogant visit to pop back in to the poorest city in the United States, where people have very little health care," she said.

The country would be better off if the war funding was used for health care and other social programs, she said.

Pacione held aloft a sign that read "Peace" and draped over her shoulders a placard that read "Grandmother 4 peace on Earth."



Sarah Taylor, 62, held a sign that said "President Bush is a disgrace to the U.S.A."

"I am so ashamed of President Bush. I think he's an appalling leader. He's trying to dismantle Social Security and he attacks and bombs other countries," she said.

At a health care forum in Maryland on Wednesday, Bush predicted electronic records will prove "one of the great innovations" in modern medicine. He predicted it will "wring out inefficiencies" without compromising privacy. Bush's health-care agenda

#### SURVEY

Are you in favor of a plan to computerize most of America's medical records within a decade?

- Yes, it's about time.
- Maybe, depending on how secure they are.
- No, e-records won't be secure enough anytime soon.
- I don't know.

[Results](#) | [Disclaimer](#)

includes encouraging "health savings accounts" to pay for all but the biggest-ticket medical treatments.

Critics have accused Bush of focusing on small health care initiatives while ignoring huge problems -- such as soaring costs and the more than 40 million Americans who don't have insurance.

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., is criticizing Bush's failure to negotiate drug prices or consider drug reimportation. He called the president's health care policies "a cradle-to-grave irresponsibility plan."

The remarks were prepared ahead of Kerry's visit Thursday with a nonprofit consumer group. The speech is the latest sign that Kerry will keep up his criticism of Bush. In previous speeches promoting electronic medical records, Bush has said that although the United States is at the forefront of many medical advances, the way doctors and hospitals do business hasn't kept up.

The result is that files get misplaced, and problems with drug interactions aren't systematically checked, among other problems, he said.

The president has acknowledged that, in moving toward electronic medical records, patient privacy is a concern and a top priority.

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