



Bush Pushes Computerized Medical Records

Friday, January 28, 2005

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — President Bush returned to the state that helped seal his re-election victory to pitch his second-term health agenda, urging greater use of computerized **medical records** ([search](#)) and electronic prescriptions.

"It can save money and save lives," Bush said Thursday at a forum at the Cleveland Clinic. He said medical record-keeping, where most prescriptions and many medical documents are still handwritten, lags that of other industries.

In Washington, the Department of Health and Human Services announced steps to incorporate electronic prescribing into the new **Medicare** ([search](#)) **prescription drug** ([search](#)) program that begins in January 2006.

The regulations will require that e-prescribing is made available to participating seniors, White House spokesman Trent Duffy said.

It was Bush's first trip of his second term, and he chose the state whose 20 electoral votes put him over the top on Election Day — a victory that triggered a wave of Democratic protests over voting irregularities.

The president plans a series of barnstorming trips to promote his domestic agenda, many to swing states that were critical in the 2004 race and will be battlegrounds in future elections.

"We've got the best medical system in the world. The role of the federal government is to keep it that way," the president told a hand-picked audience of doctors and other medical professionals.

Bush has issued a raft of proposals that would have Americans shoulder more financial responsibility for health care and retirement.

This includes medical savings accounts, which are tax-free investments that can be used for health expenses; allowing small businesses in different states to band to offer insurance to workers; and adding private investment accounts to **Social Security** ([search](#)).

"Most industries in America have used information technology to make their businesses more cost effective, more efficient and more productive - and the truth of the matter is health care hasn't," Bush said.

In the budget he will send Congress next month, Bush will propose spending \$125 million to test computerization of health records, more than twice what is being spent in the budget year that ends Sept. 30.

Bush also said ways must be found to safeguard medical records to protect against "people prying into them."

Bush's pledge to do more to encourage wider use of electronic medical record-keeping - and allow pharmacies, hospitals, doctors' offices and insurers to share information - was praised as a good starting point by the health care industry.

"There has been a huge amount of pressure from across the health care field to have the federal government take an active role in the development of electronic health care records," said Scott Wallace, head of the National Alliance for Health Information Technology.

The Cleveland Clinic has been helping the government develop standards for medical computerization and Bush heard from doctors who showed him some of the technology and then joined him on the stage.

"Very impressive," Bush said.

Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Levitt, on only his second day on the job, accompanied Bush. Levitt said wider use of computers for medical information brings "lower costs and fewer mistakes"

About a dozen protesters huddled outside in the bitter cold. An effigy of Bush was stuck into a snow pile.

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

"I think he's an appalling leader. He's trying to dismantle Social Security and he attacks and bombs other countries," Taylor said.

SEARCH

GO

Advertise on FOX News Channel, FOXNews.com and FOX News Radio

Jobs at FOX News Channel.

Internships at FOX News Channel (now accepting applications for Summer internships).

Terms of use. Privacy Statement. For FOXNews.com comments write to foxnews.com; For FOX News Channel comments write to comments@foxnews.com

© Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2005 ComStock, Inc.

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Copyright 2005 FOX News Network, LLC. All rights reserved.

All market data delayed 20 minutes.

