Political voices from Germany

The US and German healthcare systems are quite different. With regard to e-health, what can the German healthcare system learn from the US healthcare system and vice versa? How would patients benefit from e-health and what are the benefits for insurers?

The US healthcare system offers excellent medical treatment — but all too often only for those who can afford it. In Germany, however, everyone has access to modern and extensive healthcare, even if innovations take a lot of time to be implemented. While the German healthcare system is still mostly nondigital, telemedicine is widely accepted in the US. However, US hospitals are far more affected by data breaches. This is where the slower German approach may turn out to be more secure in the end. What both systems seem to have embraced is that e-health has a lot of potential for medical staff and, above all, patients.

Maria Klein-Schmeink, Alliance 90/The Greens
Member of the German Parliament
Speaker for Public Health Policy and Member of the Alliance 90/The Greens Health Committee

Unfortunately, in Germany we sometimes tend to focus on the risks of innovation instead of the potentials; but luckily, this culture is changing. Germany can learn a lot from the American entrepreneurial spirit. Digitalization of our healthcare systems will boost research, improve medical care for patients and reduce bureaucracy for insurers. The US healthcare system has developed in an impressive approach to this over the past several years. Especially in the private sector, innovation cycles have become much shorter.

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