

## **ATA SIG Reports**

### **SIG Name:**

International SIG

### **Current Leaders & Affiliations:**

Chair: Dale C. Alverson, MD

Medical Director, Center for Telehealth and Cybermedicine Research  
University of New Mexico

Co-Chair: Jana Lindsey, RN, CMC

Telemedicine Coordinator  
Shriners Hospitals for Children, Honolulu, HI

SIG Executive Committee Members: Malcolm Clarke (Immediate past Co-Chair),  
Chuck Doarn (Immediate past Co-Chair), Juan Ramon Arosema (Chair,  
ATALACC), Dale Moyen (Chair, PICATA)

### **Approximate membership:**

203

### **Mission statement:**

The ATA International SIG creates a forum for international communication, cooperation, coordination and potential collaboration in telehealth. The SIG provides a network for sharing of knowledge and experiences related to telehealth within the international community addressing individual nation's development and use of telehealth, as well as cross-border initiatives addressing a spectrum of health issues both regional and global, respectful of each country's needs, capabilities, and cultural perspectives.

Continued advances in health information technologies (HIT)/information communication technologies (ICT), computing and wireless networks are enabling improved access to healthcare information, health services, research and education independent of distance on an international level. In combination, these distance technologies and health-related applications constitute the concept of telehealth. As stated by the World Health Organization, telehealth is providing a broad spectrum of health services over distance and the integration of telecommunications systems into the practice of protecting and promoting health. Telehealth covers clinical services, education for health, public and community health, health systems development, epidemiology and research. In turn, telehealth is allowing an enhanced means of sharing knowledge and expertise, "leap-frogging" over the barriers of distance and time. Global development and integration of communication systems and networks, wireless and broad band are creating opportunities for international collaboration using telehealth and a platform for exchange with the potential for formation of a true "network of networks" and "virtual collaboratory" that can be used world-wide. This network of networks is far more than a communication infrastructure but constitutes a platform for a social network and

consortia of healthcare providers and educators, public health workers, investigators, and other international organizations and stakeholders

These types of international exchange experiences enhanced with telehealth offer significant opportunities for understanding the common denominators, as well as unique differences, related to global health among countries and cultures around the world. The mounting concerns related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the re-emergence of tuberculosis, increasing issues related to hepatitis C, malaria, the threat of pandemic influenza, the need for improved maternal/child health, the threat of natural or man-made disasters, and the shortage of healthcare providers highlight the importance and value of telehealth and international collaboration. These programs can promote international understanding and mutual respect in a manner that can improve the entire global community.

### **Summary of goals for 2007-2008**

1. Conduct a survey of ATA membership regarding multi-national, cross border telehealth activities. A survey Instrument was developed and distributed to the international SIG members and ATA general membership. Results of these surveys will be organized and made available on the International SIG web pages.
2. Develop a directory of key contacts for telemedicine in other countries. The directory will be made available on the International SIG web pages.
3. Organize and conduct International panel discussions at ATA mid-year conference 2007. The value of this type of broadly represented international forum was demonstrated at the ATA mid-year conference and the “Global Forum on Telemedicine: Connecting the World through Partnerships, International Roadmap for Action” held in Las Vegas in September 2007. The proceedings from that portion of the conference will be published in the *Telemedicine and e-Health Journal* with recommendations for future action.
4. Explore the possibility of hosting mid-year meetings in other countries.
5. Continue international sessions at the ATA Annual meetings. Several international telemedicine programs/abstracts will be represented at the 2008 annual ATA meeting in Seattle, as well as the SIG meeting at the annual conference on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>.
6. Develop a white paper, “Report on Globalization of Telemedicine”. Initial draft was started at the ATA mid-year conference in 2007.
7. Promote submission and publication of international articles in the *Telemedicine and e-Health Journal*. The Journal received 132 manuscripts in 2007 of which 61 (46%) were international, representing 13 countries outside the US. The Journal encourages international submissions as another forum for sharing experiences in global telemedicine.
8. Promote more international membership in ATA. The SIG is working with ATA staff and the ATA Chapter Chairs (ATALACC and PICATA) to develop strategies to promote ATA membership from other countries and developing a target for increased international membership in 2008. Regular International SIG conference calls have been organized to provide a forum for ongoing communication between members, along with an updated Web page on the ATA Web site.

9. Foster communications with other international organizations such as the United Nations, WHO, PAHO, ISfT, Red Cross, and others. Plan to designate ATA representatives to develop dialogue with these international organizations and determination of potential for collaborations that are mutually beneficial. Invite representatives of these international organization to participate in the the ATA Annual Meetings.