



Workshop objectives & description

Background: The 2007 workshop followed the Institute's ground-breaking 1997 workshop *Quality of health information on the Internet - telling fact from fraud*. It continued and expanded the discussion that the Institute began in our previous workshop. In the intervening 10 years, the internet has become one of the most essential tools for communicating and searching for health information.

Objectives: The 2007 workshop provided the opportunity for health experts, representatives of relevant organizations, and consumers to discuss challenges and to explore strategies to improve the quality and utility of online health information. Participants:

- Analyzed changes and issues regarding web-based health information and services
- Shared methods organizations used to publish and evaluate health information on the Internet
- Discussed how to improve the quality and utility of health information on the Internet.

Format: The Institute chose to use the same interactive format for the 2007 workshop it did for its very successful 1997 workshop. This format comprised several context-setting presentations at the start of the workshop; moderated small workgroup discussions; and a plenary session to present and to discuss small workgroup's results. The Institute selected the following four topics to focus workshop discussions:

- What consumers want & will use – *Do consumers care about the quality of health information?*
- Future of trustmarks, ratings & consumer feedback – *Are trustmarks dead?*
- Information for consumers to make their healthcare decisions – *Will consumerism save the system?*
- Gathering evidence & improving research – *Does evidence make a difference?*

Report: The Institute produced a workshop report to summarize participants' findings, conclusions, and recommendations for assessing, monitoring, and improving the quality of health information on the Internet and enabling consumers to use it to improve their health and health care. The Institute evaluated the 2007 workshop through feedback from workshop participants and consumers of workshop products. Workshop products are expected to have a national impact and the potential to influence future research, policy, and practice (as the outcomes of 1997 workshop demonstrate).

Institute: Health Improvement Institute, founded in 1990, is a non-profit, tax exempt, 501(c)3, charitable organization dedicated to improving the quality and productivity of America's health care. In 2003, Health Improvement Institute and Consumers Union announced a partnership - Consumer Health WebWatch - to publish independent rating of health websites; visit www.healthratings.org.

Sponsors of the 2007 workshop included Consumers Union & Consumer Reports WebWatch.