

Hospital chief Dante Morra to speak at RICC conference

Dante Morra believes that research, innovation and technology can change hospitals.

But the internist and chief of staff at Trillium Health Partners thinks companies and entrepreneurs should think about solving fundamental problems in the healthcare system before creating new equipment or applications. “That’s where you need the innovation to happen,” he told YourMississaugaBiz.com.

“Healthcare doesn’t need any more shiny objects.”

The efficiency expert and professor at University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management will be speaking at the RIC Centre’s TechNext conference taking place at the Mississauga Convention Centre on April 10.

Morra plans on speaking about how implementing technology in healthcare requires working with providers like clinicians or physicians to find real problems already in the system.

“The sooner that you get working with clinicians and patients, the better chance you’re going to design something that adds value,” he said. “The further away you are from the healthcare environment, the higher the chance it’s not going to work.”

Morra said “top-down” solutions like eHealth and other similar initiatives had much higher risks for patient safety, patient cost, and higher chance of large-scale failure.

However, even though there are lots of ideas coming from within the healthcare system, Morra said there aren’t many spaces where people can test technology alongside clinicians and patients to see if it works.

Morra said there is a notable lack of places for research and innovation when it comes to the area of healthcare. Not only are they difficult to create, these research and innovation centres also require expertise and attention to properly execute. “And it does require a choice,” he said. “It’s important to have a place where people can come and say, this is what I need help with, and then being able to add value in that process.”

Trillium Health Partners has plans for an area similar to the University Health Network’s Centre for Innovation in Complex Care. “We would like to be a place where our brightest minds go to create new solutions,” Morra said. “It’s about designing the right interface and innovation model to create the right place for people to come.”

Partnerships will vary from each project and business. Morra imagines small and medium-sized technology companies will see a pretty clear value-proposition.

“With large corporations, I think it’s having the chance to de-risk their ideas and their solutions with a sophisticated partner,” he said.

Morra said one of the biggest healthcare problems he would love to see technology help solve is frequent users of the health care system.

“Five percent of our population uses 65 percent of our resources,” he said, citing patients with multiple disorders or diseases across all age groups. “That’s a fundamental problem right now and that’s the new marketplace for healthcare.”