



Information Technology – A 10 Year Plan

Technology affects us in many ways and continues to have a major impact on the way we live our lives. In the future, technology will most likely have a greater impact on the way healthcare is delivered. This is not happening solely as a result of random events but, rather many changes in healthcare technology are now being influenced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The HHS is responsible for protecting the health of Americans. Accordingly, the HHS has developed a 10-year vision to achieve an interoperable Health IT infrastructure. This vision establishes goals to create a nationwide interoperable health IT infrastructure where individuals, their families and their health care providers have appropriate access to health information that facilitates informed decision-making, supports coordinated health management, allows patients to be active partners in their health and care, and improves the overall health of our populations.

The first step of the plan is referred to as meaningful use – formerly known as Medicare and Medicaid and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. Under this program many hospitals and healthcare professionals have already adapted healthcare technology meeting certain defined criteria, such as requiring electronic health records (EHR'S). The HHS has a ten-year plan to make the existing infrastructure more robust. The key vision of the plan is to make health data interoperable so it can be shared by individuals, providers, researchers and public health professionals.

The ten year vision includes the following:

Three Year Agenda – During the initial three years the focus is on ensuring that individuals and care providers can electronically share a basic set of essential health information (which was previously defined during the transition to meaningful use under the Medicare and Medicaid EHRS incentive programs). Examples include allowing individuals to look up their immunization histories, having primary care providers and specialists share basic information or having hospitals electronically sending a care summary to primary care physicians when patients are discharged from the hospital.


Six Year Agenda – Within six years, the goal is to achieve enhanced interoperability. This means that individuals will be more actively involved in managing their care by contributing information to their own health records. An expanded population of care providers such as schools, ambulances and prisons will be able to exchange and use health information. Also remote monitoring will be enabled through interoperability between medical devices


and home monitoring tools. Additionally population health will be better monitored as information from multiple sources will be aggregated for real time analysis.

Ten Year Agenda – Within 10 years, the evolution of standards, policies and data infrastructure will enable more standardized data collection making continuous learning about healthcare trends feasible through analysis of aggregated data from a variety of sources. As a result public health surveillance will be improved. Within ten years, the goal is to allow individuals to manage information from their own electronic devices and share that information with various providers including physicians and social service providers.

Through standardization a fully interoperable infrastructure of coordinated care and communication among health care providers, patients and public health entities may arise under the HHS ten year vision plan.

Best Regards,









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