

## Rhode Island Quality Institute (Providence, RI)



### Overview and Goals

The [Rhode Island Beacon Community \(RIBC\)](#) is one of 17 Beacon Communities building and strengthening local health IT infrastructure and testing innovative approaches to make measurable improvements in health, care and cost. [Meaningful Use](#) of electronic health records (EHR) is the foundation of the exciting work in each community. Funded by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology and led by the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI), RIBC is using existing health IT investments, including CurrentCare, the statewide Health Information Exchange, and Regional Extension Center (REC) initiatives to pursue the following goals:



- Improving the quality of care received by patients with diabetes by increasing the number of patients maintaining blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol goals
- Reducing the impact of tobacco use by promoting smoking cessation
- Reducing the impact of undiagnosed and untreated depression through increased screening
- Promoting adoption of admission, discharge, and transfer (ADT) alerts to reduce preventable hospitalizations and emergency department (ED) use

### Partners

RIBC's major partners include: RIQI, the Rhode Island Department of Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island Medical Home, the Chronic Care Sustainability Initiative, and the Rhode Island Chronic Care Collaborative.

| Rhode Island Beacon Community Background        |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Total Grant Award                               | \$15,914,787 over three years |
| Lead Grantee                                    | <a href="#">RIQI</a>          |
| Geography                                       | 5 counties                    |
| # of lives affected by Beacon interventions     | 225,000 – 275,000             |
| # of providers involved in Beacon interventions | 225                           |
| # of hospital partners                          | 8                             |
| # of insurance partners                         | 5                             |
| # of FQHCs and community health clinics         | 8                             |

*“Rhode Island’s Beacon Program has helped practices monitor progress on important Quality Measures. Using comparative data within the Community, physician peers in Rhode Island are learning from one another, improving their performance in chronic care quality, building a sustainable medical care system in the State, and fostering better health among their patients.”*

- Christopher Koller, Rhode Island Health Insurance

## Strategies and Achievements

### Building and Strengthening Health IT Infrastructure

**Approach:** RIBC is extending the reach of CurrentCare, Rhode Island’s state HIE, by establishing interoperability between CurrentCare and the EHR platforms used by targeted practices. RIBC is also engaging 84 nursing homes across the state to become enrollment partners and users of CurrentCare, by providing stipends to nursing homes for the purchase of computer systems and offering best practices training around patient enrollment and HIE use. Finally, RIBC is adding valuable new functionality to CurrentCare by deploying a new CurrentCare service called Hospital Alerts that delivers automated notifications using Direct secure messaging to practices when patients are admitted or discharged from the hospital. In addition, CurrentCare’s Viewer gives primary care physicians secure access to patient medical records, allowing a quick, accurate view of a complete health and treatment history, including medications prescribed.

**Progress:**

- Hospital Alerts are enabled and flowing to 8 pilot practices (representing 33 providers); more than 6,000 hospital and ED encounter notices have been sent so far. Four additional sites have begun implementation and are expected to be completed by the end of Q4 2012.
- 100% of the targeted 84 long term care facilities are engaged as HIE enrollment partners.

- 50% of Beacon practice sites are on target to achieve Stage 1 Meaningful Use by the end of 2012.
- As of early Q3 2012, 61,000 patients had been enrolled and are participating in CurrentCare. The target is to reach 71,500 enrolled CurrentCare participants by the end of the year.
- Seven inpatient healthcare organizations are sending ADT Feeds to CurrentCare, including two health systems added in early October 2012, which represent some of the State's largest organizations.
- Improved care coordination through telehealth monitoring will occur between visiting nurse services and physicians in two ways: using Direct secure messaging and making telehealth results accessible through the HIE.

### Improving Health, Care and Costs

**Approach:** RIBC is accelerating improvement in primary care practices by providing practices with reliable quality reports demonstrating performance on key quality indicators. Providers can access quality indicators through a web portal and view their own performance relative to their peers. RIBC further supports performance improvement efforts by offering onsite consultative services for practices to support workflow redesign activities to improve care delivered to diabetic patients. These consultations include concentrated efforts to ensure that patient information captured in practices' EHRs is accurate and consistent across all providers, to ensure performance feedback reports are credible, and to improve the quality of information accessible through CurrentCare. Practices are also integrating CurrentCare's Hospital Alert notifications into their practice workflow to support post discharge follow-up and improve patient outcomes.

#### Early Results: By the Numbers

Between Q2 2011 and Q3 2012, the RIQI Beacon Community participating practices have now met target goals for three focus measures, improving:

- Blood Pressure Control (<130/80 mmHg) from 42% to 46%.
- Depression Screenings from 50% to 84%
- Tobacco Cessation Counseling from 60% to 75%

\*Number of patients included in the denominator: BP Control -14,487 to 17,114; Depression Screening – 171,397-189,849; Tobacco Cessation Counseling – 24,984 to 35,906.

#### Progress:

- All 29 practices (50 sites) representing 225 providers participating in the Beacon program are now submitting data to the comparative reporting database. More than 200 users utilize a web portal enabling convenient delivery of quality reports. Beacon efforts have enabled analysis and feedback on comparative and trended clinical and performance measures to the community of engaged practices.

- 94% of sites participating in the Beacon program are also now engaged in onsite practice coaching.

### Testing Innovative Approaches

**Approach:** RIBC is deploying a novel and comprehensive use of Direct messaging, which enables providers to send protected health information (PHI) in a secure, encrypted format to other trusted contacts with which they exchange PHI. In addition to supporting the state-wide launch of Direct messaging, the Beacon program is implementing several projects that leverage Direct messaging: encouraging the adoption of Direct by primary care physicians (PCPs) and specialists to facilitate provider-to-provider communication; notifying PCPs via a Direct message when patients enrolled in CurrentCare are admitted to or discharged from the hospital; and establishing a Direct-based methodology for transferring data between practice EHRs and CurrentCare. To support these efforts, RIBC has established the Rhode Island Trust Community, a community of verified Rhode Island providers that offers a number of value-added services including education opportunities and technology support.

#### Progress:

- 34 Beacon practice sites (representing 172 providers) have been set up with a Direct mailbox, while many additional practices across the state are participating in the Trust Community.
- The Rhode Island Trust Community now offers members a choice between 3 different Health Information Service Providers, which are vendors that package message content using Direct protocols, secure the confidentiality and integrity of the content through data encryption, ensure the authenticity of the sender and receiver, and handle routing of Direct messages.

**For more information on the Rhode Island Beacon Community, visit:  
[www.RIQI.org](http://www.RIQI.org).**

Darby Buroker  
Director, Beacon Program Management  
[dburoker@riqi.org](mailto:dburoker@riqi.org)

Lisa DiPrete  
Director, Communication  
[LDiPrete@riqi.org](mailto:LDiPrete@riqi.org)