



## Learning Guide Overviews

In 2010 the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) provided funding to 17 communities with the goal of achieving better care, better health, and lower costs through building and strengthening health IT. After three years of building health IT infrastructure, driving care improvement, and testing innovative approaches, these communities (called Beacon Communities) came together with the ONC to share their experiences as part of the Beacon Nation project. Funded by the Hawai'i Island Beacon Community, the project supported the development of six Learning Guides that are now available to the public.

These [Learning Guides](#) are filled with actionable information and strategies that can be adapted by hospitals, health systems, individual practices, and community organizations to help them advance community-level health care transformation using health IT. Learning Guides review the challenges and benefits of health IT and essential elements needed for success in multiple markets. The Guides include:

- Key foundational elements to support successful planning and implementation.
- Experiences and lessons learned from the federally-funded Beacon Communities, which are presented through strategic and implementation objectives, case studies, process maps and sample documents.
- A summary of future opportunities and directions.

As the nation transforms the way we provide and pay for health care, the achievements of these communities will guide others on how to meet the challenge and succeed. The Learning Guides are summarized below. The full versions are available on <http://www.healthit.gov/policy-researchers-implementers/beacon-community-program/learning-guides>.

### **Learning Guide 1: Improve Hospital Transitions and Care Management Using Automated Admission, Discharge and Transfer Alerts**

The vision of a more coordinated, patient-centered health care delivery system will be driven forward by a more timely exchange of patient information during key encounters with the health care system. With an eye toward reducing avoidable hospital readmissions and emergency department (ED) visits and improving care transitions and coordination, several Beacon Communities developed automated alerting programs based on hospital-generated admission, discharge, and transfer (ADT) feeds. This

.....  
**A Learning Guide describes a promising IT-enabled intervention that can be deployed in a community to accelerate health care transformation.**  
.....

Learning Guide distills the experiences and lessons learned from Beacon Communities as they set goals, planned for implementation, constructed a technical approach, and coached practices on effective workflow redesign to accommodate and use the new alerts to improve patient care. This Guide is designed for communities that have a goal to reduce avoidable ED visits, avoidable hospitalizations, and preventable readmissions and have identified the implementation of ADT-based alerts as a potential strategy to achieve the goals, as well as for learning collaborative organizers.

### **Learning Guide 2: Strengthening Care Management with Health Information Technology**

By bringing together patient health information from disparate sources and marrying it with measurement algorithms and other decision support tools, health IT can play a central role in supporting communities' efforts to improve the health of patients through care management. With a focus on improving care for patients with chronic disease, several Beacon Communities invested in new health IT to support care management services across the community. This Learning Guide distills the experiences and lessons learned from Beacon Communities as they set goals, selected appropriate tools, identified the necessary data elements, supported practices through implementation, and engaged patients in their health. This Guide is designed for communities and learning collaborative organizers that are interested in using health IT to support the integrated and comprehensive delivery of care management services to patients with chronic illness.

### **Learning Guide 3: Capturing High Quality Electronic Health Records Data to Support Performance Improvement**

As the health care industry moves toward value-based reimbursement—reimbursement based on the quality and cost of care—improving the quality of the data used for quality measurement is imperative. With a focus on supporting their performance improvement activities, several Beacon Communities invested in assessing and addressing the quality of data within their EHR systems. This Learning Guide distills the experiences and lessons learned from Beacon Communities as they engaged provider and physician champions, conducted data mapping for selected measures, assessed and improved the quality of data in their EHRs, and established ongoing processes to monitor and address ongoing data quality issues. This Guide is designed for health care providers and learning collaborative organizers that will rely upon EHR data to support performance improvement and new payment models.

### **Learning Guide 4: Enabling Health Information Exchange to Support Community Goals**

Electronic health information exchange (HIE) is a critical mechanism for improving the quality of care delivered to patients across the country. With the goal of connecting disparate sites and systems to enable information to follow patients, all Beacon Communities strengthened existing or, if required,

implemented new technical infrastructure to share health data in pursuit of more coordinated, patient-centered care. This Learning Guide distills the experiences and lessons learned from Beacon Communities as they convened stakeholders, assessed the landscape, created a legal framework for information sharing, developed a technical path forward, and agreed upon metrics to track usage and impact. This Guide is designed for communities and learning collaborative organizers that are interested in using data exchange capabilities to support important goals such as care coordination, care management, quality improvement and aligning payment incentives with value of health care services.

### **Learning Guide 5: Using Health Information Technology Capabilities to Support Clinical Transformation in a Practice Setting**

The increase in health IT adoption brings with it an opportunity and a challenge to transform primary care delivery. With new access to information about care that occurs beyond their clinic walls, providers are adapting their practice workflows in order to better care for their patients. Clinical transformation and performance improvement as supported and driven by health IT are key areas of focus for several Beacon Communities. This Learning Guide distills the experiences and lessons learned from Beacon Communities as they engaged practices, assessed readiness, considered practice transformation models, and collaborated on the effective deployment and use of health IT in their communities. The Learning Guide is designed for individual practices, communities, and learning collaborative organizers that are interested in using transformation models and health IT to improve practice performance and care management.

### **Learning Guide 6: Building Technology Capabilities for Population Health Measurement at the Community Level**

The Affordable Care Act and other health reform activities are advancing the health care system toward a greater focus on provider accountability for a population of patients. With the goal of developing a more complete view of patient health and care, several Beacon Communities invested in new technology capabilities to enable clinical data aggregation and population health measurement. This Learning Guide distills the experiences and lessons learned from Beacon Communities as they confirmed their goals, engaged community partners, invested in a technology infrastructure, and developed a strong foundation for measuring and improving the health of key populations of patients. This Guide is designed for communities and learning collaborative organizers that are interested in aggregating and using data from multiple sources to improve the health of populations of patients.