



Health Information Technology: a Tool to Help Clinicians Do What They Value Most

Health care professionals like you play a vital role in improving the health outcomes, quality of care, and the health care experience of patients. Health information technology (health IT) is an important tool that you can use to improve clinical practice and the health of your patients.

Health IT can help health care professionals to do what you do best: *provide excellent care to your patients.*

Health IT encompasses a wide range of electronic tools that can help you:

- Access up-to-date evidence-based clinical guidelines and decision support
- Improve the quality of care and safety of your patients
- Provide proactive health maintenance for your patients
- Better coordinate patients' care with other providers through the secure and private sharing of clinical information.

Research shows that when patients are engaged in their health care, it can lead to measurable improvements in safety and quality.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Health IT can help you to solve clinical problems with real-time data

Quality improvement and clinical decision support rely on information about your patient population being readily available in digital form. Health IT can help you monitor your patients' health status and make specific and targeted recommendations to improve your patients' health.

Access to real-time data through electronic health records and health IT will help you:

- Use clinical decision support to highlight care options tailored to your patients
- Improve safety by highlighting drug interactions or allergies when ordering medications
- Connect patients with community and educational resources to better manage their health.

A MAJORITY OF PROVIDERS

believe that electronic health information has the potential to improve the quality of patient care and care coordination.

Source: Bipartisan Policy Center Health Information Technology Initiative, October 2012

Health IT helps you to implement quality improvement within your entire practice population

Patient lists by clinical condition, patient registries, and panel management analysis tools allow you and others in your practice to view your patients' relevant health information.

You or your staff can run reports to see who is due for a visit, overdue for a mammogram, or whose A1C, for example, is out of recommended range.

Health IT-enabled registry functions can help you:

- Provide proactive outreach to patients
- Improve prevention and treatment outcomes by focusing on both patients being seen and patients who need to be seen
- Focus practice resources on care that will provide high impact
- Create benchmarks that monitor patients' health progress and overall health status

Health IT helps you track the referral process

Electronic referral management is an alternative to the paper-based referral process that frequently burdens practices and organizations. Electronic referral management helps providers:

- Enhance the efficiency of the patient's health care experience
- Improve information exchange within and across organizations
- Enhance the continuity of care for their patients
- Improve efficiency and put an end to the time-consuming and error-prone processes of filing and sending paper referral documents

94% OF CLINICIANS AGREE that health IT applications in their facility have helped make records available at the point of care.

Source: National Conference on Health Statistics 2012.

Health IT helps to improve communication and coordination among health care providers involved in the patient's continuum of care. Practices are able to securely route copies of visit summaries and procedural notes to another physician or health care setting when a patient requires additional follow up or referral regarding their care/diagnoses.

Health IT improves care delivery organization efficiency with administrative processes

Health IT can improve the administrative processes and workflows of your practice.

The advantages to using Health IT in your practice include:

- Applications and tools to support clinical processes, i.e., text-messaging appointment reminders to your patients
- Faster data processing for you and your staff – including sending and receiving your patients' lab results faster
- Timely and improved access to information needed before, after and at point-of-care – including access to your patients' electronic health records and diagnostic test results remotely

NEARLY 9 OUT OF 10 PEOPLE own a mobile device and nearly half of all Americans own a smartphone.

Source: Pew Charitable Trusts. 2012.

Health IT gives care providers the tools to manage patient information so they can better manage patient care. Federal programs have helped to accelerate the implementation of health IT in hospitals and ambulatory settings; however, no tool is effective unless it is used properly. Health IT is helping providers in the United States make better decisions, reduce costs, and improve outcomes for their patients and communities at-large.

For more information, visit the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology at <http://www.healthit.gov>.