

About the HIE Bright Spots Initiative

The HIE Bright Spots initiative is designed to identify and disseminate successful implementation practices and approaches that are worth spreading. Check out more at <http://statehieresources.org/bright-spots/>.

The exchange of clinical laboratory data plays an important role in the functioning and improvement of America's health care system. Studies estimate that U.S. laboratories (labs) conduct ten billion clinical and diagnostic tests per year.¹ While lab services account for less than 3 percent of annual health care spending, the results of lab tests affect an estimated 70 percent of medical decisions,² highlighting the potential influence of laboratory medicine on the quality, efficiency, and cost of health care.

Accessing lab data in a timely manner and in a format that allows for clinical decision support, trending analyses, and population health management is essential to delivering efficient and effective patient care. For these reasons, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) targeted the exchange of lab data among providers in meaningful use stage 1 & 2 criteria

and in Program Information Notice (PIN) priorities for State HIE Cooperative Agreement Program grantees. Even with this level of priority and visibility, achieving these requirements has been a challenging task for third partyⁱ HIE entities.

The Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis explores the primary approaches used by successful third party entities to enable lab exchange and illustrates that there is no one "secret formula" for success. While the final formula for lab exchange may differ among third party entities, we have identified several common factors linked to successful exchange:

- **A clear understanding of the local lab market dynamics**, economic incentives, and local policy levers to both identify technology and tailor service options to meet the needs of stakeholders, deliver business value, and foster adoption. The maturity and competitive nature of a given market will influence the value that third parties are able to offer for lab exchange and the specific role they may be able to play. This is especially true for entities offering lab result delivery services. (See page 12 of the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis for details.)
- **Organizational and technical maturity** are important for supporting largely automated processes/data flows whether results delivery or translation services are the third party's focus. Organizational maturity also helps build confidence in services among data trading partners. (See pages 5-7 of the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis for details.)
- **Application of the Pareto principle** helps focus attention and make several aspects of lab exchange more manageable, particularly LOINC and SNOMED coding. (See page 15 of the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis for details.)
- **Attention to critical operational factors** such as:

ⁱ The term third party is used throughout the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis to describe organizations that facilitate the exchange of lab information, but are not clinical laboratories or ordering providers/final users of the laboratory information.

- (1) ensuring staff and management resources are commensurate with the work at hand, whether supported via employees or contractors (see **page 6** of the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis for details);
- (2) dedicated project management tools and resources across all data trading partners (see **page 14** of the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis for more details); and
- (3) strategic executive support across stakeholders (see **page 15** of the Bright Spots Lab Exchange Synthesis for more details).

Proactively addressing these factors during planning and implementation phases and learning from the experience of seasoned third party HIE entities will help ensure a successful approach that is aligned to the specific needs of each local market.

To learn more, check out **Themes and Lessons from Lab Exchange Bright Spots** at <http://www.healthit.gov/policy-researchers-implementers/hie-bright-spots>.

¹ “Laboratory Medicine: A National Status Report,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2007), <http://www.cdc.gov/dls/bestpractices/>.

² “The Value of Clinical Laboratory Services,” American Clinical Lab Association (2011), <http://www.acla.com/node/355>.