



The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

Puerto Rico Health Information Technology Strategic and Operational Plan Profile

Overview

The island of Puerto Rico is a self-governing Commonwealth in association with the United States. It has approximately 4 million residents and is situated in the Caribbean Sea southeast of Florida and immediately east of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Although Puerto Rico has attempted several HIT and HIE initiatives in the past, their unique legal and cultural environments have afforded these efforts limited success. Puerto Rico currently has no HIE activity occurring between unaffiliated organizations and is working diligently to enable island-wide HIE by applying lessons from their previous HIT efforts that work with, rather than against, their unique environment. They are incrementally enabling statewide HIE by starting with Direct secure messaging solutions and a keen focus on increasing e-prescribing. Puerto Rico is in the process of legislatively establishing the Puerto Rico Health Information Network (PRHIN), which will serve as the island complying with federally recognized and approved standards and will enforce interoperability between HIE efforts to ensure closed networks do not emerge.

Model and Services

Phase I

Until legislative changes took effect in September 2010, the legal environment in Puerto Rico made e-prescribing virtually impossible, as prior to this date Puerto Rico law restricted the dispensing of prescription medication until a patient handed a paper copy of his or her prescription with an original handwritten signature from the prescriber to the pharmacist. This context has limited gradual prescriber and pharmacy e-prescribing uptake observed in other states and territories and requires a thoughtful approach to on-boarding both prescribers and pharmacists. Recognizing the need for technical resources coupled with education and training, the Puerto Rico Department of Health has already initiated an outreach campaign to pharmacies across the island and has learned that 624 of 900 pharmacies on the island already have Surescripts certified systems, but have turned off the e-prescribing modules. The outreach and one-to-one work with island pharmacies that has already initiated will continue with a goal of 100% pharmacy participation in e-prescribing.

Puerto Rico will also deploy a Direct secure messaging strategy through the PRHIN to support exchange of patient care summaries and will use these transport specifications to facilitate delivery of structured lab results in 2011. The PRHIN focused on this deployment during the second half of 2011, as they have prioritized making headway in e-prescribing for the first part of the year. The PRHIN will serve as the island's "go to" Health Information Service Provider (HISP); however, they will not constrain the market to prevent other HISP offerings and recognize the importance of ensuring open communication across HISPs, especially in light of patient movement between the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida and several other mainland states.



State: Puerto Rico

HIT Coordinator:

José E. Piovanetti

State Designated Entity: Oticina del Gobernador La Fortaleza (Puerto Rico)

Award Amount:

\$7,770,980

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Other Related ONC funding in Indiana:

Regional Extension Center (REC):
Ponse School of Medicine, Puerto Rico:
\$19,280,796



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Phase II

Puerto Rico plans to implement more robust HIE offerings in the future, including Master Patient Index (MPI) and Record Locator Service (RLS) functionality; however, they recognize the need to implement in increments and adjust their strategy based on the needs of patients and providers. Their previous experiences with less than successful Health Information Technology (HIT) initiatives play a strong role in their current phases approach.



Highlights

- **Conscious approach to change management:** The Puerto Rico plan builds on lessons from previous HIT and HIE efforts in approaching state-wide HIE as a change management process as much as a technical implementation. The HIE team works closely with the REC team to not only implement HIE supports, but to help providers integrate HIE in their daily workflow.
- **Leveraging assets for open directories:** The centralized nature of many of Puerto Rico's Medical Licensing and Disciplinary Board (a.k.a Puerto Rico Health Professionals Licensing Board, or PRHPLB) provides the PRHIN with an excellent asset to leverage for their Individual-Level Provider Directory (ILPD). Collaboration with the PRHPLB will allow the PRHIN's ILPD to be updated by constant database feeds from the PRHPLB licensing systems; assuring that the PRHIN's ILPD holds the most up-to-date data, at all times. PRHIN will also leverage the Puerto Rico Medicaid MPI database, which has 1.5 million active Medicaid beneficiaries included, representing a little over 33% of the Puerto Rico population, to build their MPI in later phases.
- **Removing legal barriers to exchange:** The Puerto Rico HIE team has demonstrated keen attention in carefully leveraging legislative changes that will enable island-wide HIEs, as observed through the legal changes they promoted to lift e-prescribing barriers.
- **E-prescribing outreach initiative:** The Puerto Rico (PR) HIE team has done extensive outreach to the entire e-prescribing ecosystem – from pharmacies, to Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), pharmacy owners, pharmacy system vendors, and providers and patients. The HIE team has performed significant work in helping the health care community and patients understand the new law and value of e-prescribing. They have worked with pharmacies to turn on e-prescribing they had previously turned off and integrate e-prescribing modules where they don't have them. They have worked closely with the REC to provide onsite training and support to help providers adjust to e-prescribing and integrate it into their workflows. They have engaged pharmacy technology vendors, PBMs, and pharmacy owners to ensure there is understanding of the law, rally stakeholders around e-prescribing, and get tangible action underway.

Puerto Rico has used the e-prescribing outreach momentum to successfully implement a pilot at the San Juan Municipality Health Center. A major milestone for the PR HIE and REC teams, e-prescribing was successfully implemented in April 2011 in the Hoare Clinic, a large community health center of the San Juan Municipality. Valuable lessons continue to be learned from this provider and pharmacy e-prescribing implementation that will help inform both HIE and REC efforts as they move to rapidly tip the e-prescribing scale across the territory.



Meaningful Use

| | <u>Landscape</u> | <u>Strategy</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>E-Prescribing</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 900 pharmacies on the island; 75% are small, independent community pharmacies. • With the exception of the Hoare Clinic, there are no pharmacies that are actively accepting e-prescriptions; however, Puerto Rico estimates approximately 624/900 (69%) of small independent pharmacies have systems with Surescripts certification (has been turned off due to previous policy environment). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRHIN efforts will focus on small, independent community pharmacies with their educational and outreach campaign to encourage adoption of e-prescribing capability or turning on of existing capability. |
| <u>Structured Lab Results</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 labs are capable of sending structured lab results. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRHIN will work with REC to get Direct specifications into HER products as soon as possible. • PRHIN is also working with Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) vendors on the island to integrate Direct specifications into their products. • PRHIN will enable ordering and delivery of structured lab results via Direct transport specifications. • PRHIN will offer portal functionality for Direct secure messaging for as long as needed, particularly until specifications are broadly incorporated into EHRs. |
| <u>Patient Care Summary</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No patient care summary exchange is occurring between unaffiliated organizations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRHIN will enable Direct secure messaging to support exchange of patient care summaries. |



HIE Inventory

| Standards | | Quality Improvement | |
|--|----------------|---|----------|
| Nationwide Health Information Network Exchange Specifications | X | Care Coordination | |
| Nationwide Health Information Network CONNECT | | Quality Reporting | |
| Nationwide Health Information Network DIRECT | X | Behavioral Health Information Exchange | |
| Plans to exchange with federal agencies or other states via Nationwide Health Information specifications | X | | |
| Public Health | | Lab Strategy | |
| Electronic lab reporting of notifiable conditions | X | Translation services | |
| Syndromic surveillance | X | EHR interface | |
| Immunization data to an immunization registry | X | Policy strategy | |
| Patient Engagement | | Order Compendium | |
| Patient Access/PHR | X | Bi-Directional | |
| Blue Button | | | |
| Patient Outreach | X | E-Prescribing | |
| Privacy and Security | | Alignment with CLIA | |
| Privacy and Security Framework based on FIPS | X | Medication History | X |
| Individual choice (Opt In/Opt Out/hybrid) | Opt Out | Incentive or grants to independents | |
| Authentication Services | X | Plan for controlled substance | |
| Audit Log | | Set goal for 100% participation | |
| Administrative Simplification | | Controlled substance strategy | |
| Electronic eligibility verification | X | Care Summaries | |
| Electronic claims transactions | | Translation services | |
| Vendor | | CCD/CCR Repository | |
| Planning | | Directories | |
| Core Services | | Provider Directory | X |
| Plan Model | | Master Patient Index | X |
| Identified model(s) | TBD | Record Locator Services | X |
| | | Health Plan Directory | X |
| | | Directory of licensed clinical laboratories | X |

Information for this profile was obtained from the approved Operational and Strategic Plan submitted to the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology as a condition of the Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement. The complete plan can be downloaded at: <http://statehieresources.org/>



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