State Health IT Policy Levers Compendium:
Overview and Guide

Summary

This overview and guide accompanies the release of the State Health IT Policy Levers Compendium. This tool was developed by the Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) in coordination with states. It is intended to support state efforts to advance interoperability and can also be used in service of delivery system reform. The Compendium includes a directory of health IT policy levers and nearly 300 examples of how states have used them. All examples in the Compendium have been validated by state officials. The information held in the Compendium is organized as an Excel workbook with three tabs that allow for useful filtering of state-level data, with certain limitations. The information will also be displayed via an interactive map on ONC's website (healthIT.gov).

Background

A health IT policy lever can be defined as any form of incentive, penalty, or mandate used to effectuate change in support of health IT adoption, use, or interoperability. The policy levers categorized and catalogued in the Compendium are limited to those that employ joint federal-state authorities (i.e., Medicaid levers), state-level authorities, and private sector levers. State-level authorities generally mean state laws, state regulations, state funding, and state programs (again, outside of Medicaid) that direct the spending of state money on providing care or influencing it in some way. Private-sector levers are included to the extent they are implemented at a state level. Federal-level policies (e.g., Medicare levers) are considered out of scope for the Compendium.

This tool will help advance the country toward a delivery system with better care, smarter spending, and healthier people. In early 2015, ONC released Connecting Health and Care for the Nation: Shared Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap (FINAL Version 1.0) which made specific calls to action of states to use policy levers to advance interoperability in support of delivery system reform. The Compendium is designed to help support these calls to action. State governments have already made tremendous progress on this front, as evident from the policy lever activities that are catalogued in the Compendium. This tool is intended to augment this success and to spur peer-to-peer discussions and learning opportunities, allowing for further advancement in the use of such policy levers.

Introduction to Compendium Excel Workbook

The Compendium's information is held in an Excel workbook with three spreadsheet tabs. The information is organized as follows:

- **Policy Levers Directory** – This spreadsheet describes each policy lever and its potential uses to advance health IT and interoperability. Where known, state examples are enumerated. Policy levers are also tagged as to whether they can be considered a state-level authority, which correspond to specific calls to action made in the Interoperability Roadmap that states expand the use of such levers.
- **Example Activities Catalogue** – This spreadsheet lists example health IT policy lever activities within a state, categorizes them by the policy levers being employed, and provides hyperlinks to primary sources for further information.
- **State Points of Contact List** – This spreadsheet lists a point of contact within each state that can be contacted for further information about how a state is implementing a particular policy lever.

The data to construct the Compendium was originally derived from the following: ONC State HIE Program Strategic Operational Plan Updates submitted by states, public documents of Medicaid State Plan Amendments and 1115 Waivers, and ONC staff knowledge based on state interactions. All the state activities catalogued have been reviewed and validated by state government officials from the respective states.

Using the Compendium

The Compendium has the potential to advance state use of policy levers to support interoperability and potentially delivery system reform.

For example, a state might wish to understand how other states are using Medicaid Health Home State Plan Amendments to advance health IT and interoperability goals. The Policy Levers Directory provides a description of the "Medicaid State Plan Amendments (SPA)" policy lever and how it can be used to advanced health IT and interoperability. The "Policy Lever" column in the Example Activities Catalogue tab can be filtered for this lever to see all states that have activities utilizing this lever.

In addition to sorting the data by policy levers, one can also sort the Example Activities Catalogue data by state. If a user is interested in finding policy activities related to specific health IT topics (e.g., EHR adoption, privacy and security, care settings), we recommend using the find function (Ctrl + F) in Excel to locate activities that include those key terms of interest.

Limitations

The Compendium has some limitations to keep in mind as you use it.
- The Compendium does not represent a comprehensive analysis of all policies that impact health IT and interoperability.
- The Compendium does not represent an endorsement of any particular policy lever or activity, nor does it evaluate the effectiveness or impact of any activity.
- The data sources were limited in their scope. The comprehensiveness of example activities occurring within a state or the level of details documented may vary between and within states.
  - ONC suggests states also research other sources, such as George Washington University's HealthInfoLaw.org website, which contains information about state-level privacy and security laws and other policies.
- The policy levers described in the Compendium are not necessarily mutually exclusive, i.e., some levers could be included in the description or interoperability uses of other levers. The Compendium seeks to achieve a balance between strict categorization and ensuring that levers are labeled in the most useful manner possible.

Future Goals

ONC expects to maintain the Compendium via periodic updates. This initial launch will serve as a foundation upon which ONC will work with states to update and refine the information in the tool. It will also allow ONC to make improvements to the structure and possibly the format of the Compendium.

Questions, Suggestions, and Contact Information

If you have questions about the information documented in the Compendium, suggestions for improvements, updates, or any other related topics, please contact John Rancourt at john.rancourt@hhs.gov and Janelle Johnson at Janelle.johnson@hhs.gov.