

healthpolicyprimer



Making the connection

A progress report on the history and status of statewide HIT and HIE implementation in Ohio

Introduction

In the past seven years, Ohio has become a national leader in the adoption of health information technology (HIT). In fact, the state has more primary care physicians (4,994) signed up to adopt electronic medical record systems through the Ohio Health Information Partnership than any other state in the nation (by comparison, California has the second most at 3,219 and New York is ranked third with 2,962). Cincinnati-based HealthBridge's Tri-State Regional Extension Center that serves southwestern Ohio has signed an additional 800 providers with more than 50 percent of those having already adopted an electronic health records (EHR). In addition, HealthBridge has garnered national attention for being one of the oldest and largest regional health information exchanges (HIE) in the nation.

Ohio's tremendous success in the adoption of HIT required vision and commitment from a large number of Ohio stakeholders and organizations. This publication traces the history of HIT development in Ohio and provides a progress report on the completion of an infrastructure that will allow all health care providers to seamlessly share patient health records electronically across the state.

Initial conversations

In April 2004, on the heels of the federal government's announcement of a national health network initiative and an accompanying set of requests for proposal (RFP), the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) and other health leaders recognized the long-term potential for HIT to reduce health care costs and improve quality of care in Ohio.

In August 2004, HPIO convened a diverse group of stakeholders engaged in, or interested in, the development of integrated health information technology systems. The goal of this effort was to create broader awareness, foster dialogue, and encourage productive relationships among key stakeholders involved in e-health activities. In October, 2004, HPIO convened the first Ohio Health Information Technology Summit to foster statewide networking opportunities among groups working on HIT/HIE issues. Participants at the meeting strongly encouraged HPIO to spearhead efforts to develop a shared strategic vision for HIT/HIE in Ohio.

The Ohio Health Information Technology (OHHIT) Initiative

In 2005, HPIO convened an Ohio HIT Steering Committee (OHHIT) to continue the dialogue on HIT. The Steering Committee worked with the Foundation for e-Health Initiatives (eHI) in Washington, D.C. to secure a grant to build regional health information technology systems in Ohio. HPIO also partnered with eHI to research and write a paper assessing HIT in Ohio. eHI conducted interviews with more than 30 state leaders to identify the main obstacles and challenges to expanding HIT. The paper, *Assessing Health Information Technology in Ohio*, was released in October 2005 at the Ohio Health Information Technology Symposium, co-sponsored by HPIO and eHI. In addition to a panel presentation from Ohio's top health-care leaders, the symposium featured keynote addresses by several national HIT experts.

Also during the summer of 2005, the Steering Committee and HPIO developed a proposed project plan for the OHHIT initiative. The plan was unveiled at a meeting in February 2006, where participants were asked to respond to the proposed plan and work together to develop a strategic vision and recommendations for enhancing the adoption of HIT and HIE in Ohio. This diverse stakeholder group, representing employers, providers, payers, consumers and government, was named the Health Information Community of Ohio (HICO) Advisory Group. In the months that followed, HICO met regularly to finalize the strategic plan.

The Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC)

In May 2006, based on the OHHIT groundwork, HPIO, as a designee of Gov. Robert Taft, was awarded a \$350,000 federal contract on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Governor's Association Center For Best Practices for the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC). The contract called for HPIO to assess how Ohio's privacy and security laws and business practices affect the exchange of electronic health information and to identify modifications that would facilitate the exchange of information in an integrated statewide HIT system. In August 2006, HPIO hired a Project Coordinator to manage both the OHHIT and HISPC Projects and to coordinate the work of a 24-member Steering Committee and an array of working groups.

The Strategic Roadmap for HIT and HIE

Upon completion of the OHHIT strategic plan and recommendations in October 2006, HPIO published the report, *A Strategic Roadmap and Policy Options for the Effective Adoption of Health Information Technology and Exchange in Ohio*. The report incorporated the work of the OHHIT and HISPC projects, as well as input gathered from a broad range of stakeholders across Ohio.

The roadmap outlined policy recommendations in four areas:

- Organizational structure
- Adoption of health information technology
- Interoperability (ability to share information among different technologies)
- Health information exchange

HPIO completed phase 1 of the HISPC Project in March 2007, and received a six-month, phase 2 extension to address implementation. The Steering Committee and working groups continued to regularly meet to focus on the details of the phase 2 deliverables: a final implementation plan, scenario analysis and stakeholder consensus reports. In addition, HPIO updated the *Strategic Roadmap* publication.

The Executive Order and Ohio Health Information Partnership Advisory Board (OHIPAB)

On September 17, 2007, as a direct result of HPIO's leadership and the Roadmap's recommendation to create a state-level organization to coordinate HIT and HIE activities, Gov. Ted Strickland issued an Executive Order creating the 30-member Health Information Partnership Advisory Board (OHIPAB) to:

- Coordinate efforts around the state to bring together broad-based private and public sector representatives to formulate policies and programs that address health information technology issues in Ohio
- Develop an operational plan on how to implement the recommendations in the HISPC Implementation Plan and OHHIT Strategic Roadmap developed by HPIO for consideration by the Governor's Office and the Ohio General Assembly
- Coordinate this work with that of the Ohio Broadband Council

Then HPIO President, William Hayes, was appointed co-chair along with then State Chief Information Officer R. Steve Edmunson.

OHIPAB began work in March 2008 with the establishment of four committees charged with furthering the ideas developed in the HPIO *Roadmap* regarding adoption, exchange, governance and finance. Several recommendations OHIPAB sent to the Governor's office were adopted directly from the *Roadmap* including: the establishment of state incentives to encourage HIT adoption; the development of provider-type return on investment analysis; the adoption of the security and privacy provisions recommended by HISPC; and the formation of a non-profit Ohio corporation — the Ohio Health Information Partnership — to advance the adoption, implementation and meaningful use of electronic health record systems (EHR) among healthcare providers and to facilitate and develop a statewide electronic health information exchange (HIE).

To download HPIO's *Strategic Roadmap and Policy Options for the Effective Adoption of Health Information Technology and Exchange in Ohio*, please visit <http://bit.ly/o120Zu>

A Strategic Roadmap and Policy Options for the Effective Adoption of Health Information Technology and Exchange in Ohio



Health Information Partnership

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Ohio Health Information Partnership

With a lack of funding, the start-up and operation of the Ohio Health Information Partnership (formerly "OHIP," now "The Partnership") was stalled until 2009, when the federal government announced the availability of funds for HIT implementation through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), commonly known as the "stimulus bill." At that time, five collaborators — the Ohio State Medical Association, the Ohio Hospital Association, the Ohio Osteopathic Association, BioOhio and the State of Ohio — signed a memorandum of agreement to form the Ohio Health Information Partnership as a public-private, non-profit corporation to lead HIT expansion efforts. The Partnership brings together leading physicians, medical associations, hospital leaders, legal experts, state government departments, private sector businesses and other Ohio stakeholders to serve on the 15-member Board and various committees. Ultimately, The Partnership's vision is to improve health care and cut costs for all Ohioans through the use of advanced HIT.

Gov. Ted Strickland selected The Partnership to be the state's designated entity to apply for the ARRA funding and to direct efforts to develop a statewide health information exchange. Led by the Ohio Department of Insurance, the state designated \$8 million to The Partnership to leverage federal matching funds of \$14.7 million for the development of HIT and HIE.

Regional Extension Centers

In February 2010, the federal government, under the guidance and requirements of the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology (ONC) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), allocated \$677 million in ARRA funding to grantees across the country to serve as Regional Extension Centers (RECs). The RECs are charged with providing technical assistance, training and support services to providers interested in adopting the meaningful use of EHRs. There are two federal REC grantees in Ohio: The Partnership, which received \$28.3 million to serve as the REC for 77 of Ohio's 88 counties, and HealthBridge, which received \$9.7 million to serve as the REC for Ohio's remaining 11 counties as well as parts of Indiana and Kentucky. The Partnership delivers REC services through regional partners in seven geographic regions around the state. HealthBridge's Tri-State Regional Extension Center partners with five other organizations to deliver REC services to a tri-state area with a concentration around Cincinnati and the southwestern part of the state.

In its role as a federal REC, The Partnership has selected five preferred EHR vendors, negotiated terms favorable to physicians, and procured a readiness tool to assist practices in preparing for and selecting an EHR system. As a result of The Partnership's extensive outreach efforts, The Partnership and its regional extension centers have signed on more than 4,900 priority primary care physicians toward the goal of 6,000. HealthBridge's Tri-State REC has signed an additional 800 providers with more than 50 percent of those having already adopted an electronic health records.

The Medicaid Provider Incentive Program

The HITECH Act of ARRA also established both Medicare and Medicaid electronic health records (EHR) incentive payment programs to encourage the meaningful use of EHR technology. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and State Medicaid Agencies (SMAs) that choose to implement incentive programs are responsible for the administration of these programs in accordance with federal rules and guidance.

Launched in June 2011, Ohio's Medicaid Provider Incentive Program (MPIP) provides financial incentives to qualified Medicaid providers who adopt, implement or upgrade, and meaningfully use certified EHR technology. Ohio Medicaid works closely with the state's two REC grantees to coordinate efforts to educate and assist Medicaid-eligible health care providers interested in participating in the MPIP program.

Ohio's State Medicaid Health Information Technology Plan (SMHP) details Ohio Medicaid's plans for supporting the MPIP program and demonstrates its commitment to building additional internal infrastructure and capacity to support the growth of HIE and EHR more broadly. Ohio's SMHP can be accessed here: <http://procure.ohio.gov/pdf/80911420118353ADDENDUM2.pdf>

To learn more about the Ohio Health Information Partnership, visit its website at www.clinisync.org

To learn more about HealthBridge, visit its website at www.healthbridge.org

Ohio a national leader in HIE

For over a decade, Ohio has been a leader in HIE development. In fact, HealthBridge, founded in 1997, is considered one of the nation's largest and most advanced health information exchange organizations. In 2008, HealthBridge and two other Ohio HIEs -- Cleveland Clinic and Wright State HealthLink -- joined the Nationwide Health Information Network Exchange (Nw-HIN) Trial Implementation Cooperative in 2008 to develop the capacity to exchange data with other HIEs around the country.

This early involvement with national-level information exchange activities led to both HealthBridge and Wright State HealthLink working under contract with the Social Security Administration's Medical Evidence Gathering and Analysis through Health Information Technology project — a program that uses the Nw-HIN to deliver patient records electronically to improve the disability determination process.

Other Ohio efforts to support national HIE include:

- HealthBridge joined CMS's CARE Health Information Exchange project — a program to validate national standards for data interoperability and secure data exchange for better health transitions;
- Wright State HealthLink joined ONC's national workforce development initiative serving as faculty for four of the twenty components training HIT implementation specialists and technicians to assist providers with EHR adoption and meaningful use;
- HealthBridge and five Greater Cincinnati community partners — Greater Cincinnati Health Council, the Health Collaborative, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, the University of Cincinnati and GE — were awarded one of 17 Beacon Community cooperative agreements in 2010 from HHS to help Cincinnati demonstrate how health IT and exchange can improve health care cost, quality and outcomes with a specific focus on adult diabetes and pediatric asthma.

Moving forward with Ohio Health Information Partnership's Statewide HIE

As the state-designated organization for creating a statewide HIE, The Partnership has developed a State Plan for HIE that was approved by the ONC. In developing the state plan, The Partnership took the following steps for ensuring that the final product included input from a diverse group of stakeholders:

- After extensive research on federal, state and Ohio law and policies on privacy and the disclosure of patient health information, The Partnership created a privacy and security framework, Research and Recommendations for Consent Policies in Ohio. The document was publicly vetted and adjusted to reflect stakeholder feedback.
- The Partnership formed a committee to address policy issues on e-prescribing in Ohio and to identify ways to improve quality and reduce errors in the electronic processing of prescriptions
- The Partnership convened behavioral health providers to address the needs of specific providers and discuss policies around the possible exchange of sensitive patient information
- The Partnership publicly vetted and selected an HIE vendor, Medicity.

Today, The Partnership has developed and branded Ohio's statewide health information exchange – CliniSync – to serve as the infrastructure for the exchange of patient health information within Ohio and across bordering states.