

Health Information Technology Systems – Discussion Draft

Clinical information and health information technology to exchange this information are high priorities on the health agenda of the federal government, Hawaii’s Health Care Task Force, purchasers, accrediting bodies, health care providers, insurers, and consumers. In the delivery of care, better information, available when needed, aids the process of providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place. End results should be better patient outcomes, fewer patient safety incidents, and lower costs.

In April 2004, President Bush issued an Executive Order, calling for the widespread adoption of the interoperable Electronic Health Records (EHRs) within 10 years. This order accelerated movement towards addressing community clinical connectivity, including:

- Creation of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) to focus on the key issues;
- Introduction of bills in both the House and Senate to remove obstacles in the process of EHR adoption; and
- Funding availability to incent EHR adoption.

This movement towards clinical connectivity, includes the creation of a National Health Information Network which, in essence, is a network of networks based on Regional Health Information Organizations, or RHIOs. The term was first coined by David Brailer, M.D., Ph.D., the National Coordinator of the Office of Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) in the strategic plan, “The Decade of Health Information Technology: Delivering Consumer-centric and Information-rich Health Care: Framework for Strategic Action” (July 21, 2004). Four goals of the plan include:

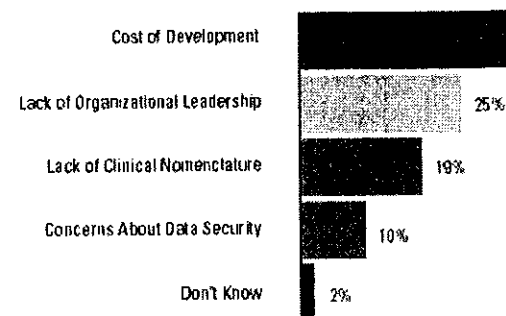
- 1) inform clinical practice,
- 2) interconnect clinicians,
- 3) personalize care, and
- 4) improve population health.

The goal to interconnect clinicians includes strategies to foster regional collaborations, develop a national health information network, and coordinate federal health information systems.

The biggest barrier to achieving interoperability and expansion of health information technology in Hawaii is financial. The technology exists and the providers of health care are ready, but funding must be found. The following was reported in the Health Information Management System Society *HIMSS Vantage Point* in April 2006:

Biggest Barrier to RHIO Implementation

David Brailer, National Coordinator for Health IT notes, that rather than a business model with sustainable funding, the critical test for RHIOs will be a governance model that brings in all stakeholders and includes established procedures for conflict resolution. Nearly half of the respondents, however, identify the cost of developing RHIOs as a key barrier. Respondents also indicate the creation of documents addressing infrastructure, data sharing and clinical data sets could provide substantial benefits for RHIO development. (See HIMSS web site, www.himss.org, for additional information.)



Who are the “players” in the RHIO movement in Hawaii?

Since 2000, with initial steps towards HIPAA implementation, Hawaii’s health plans and providers of health care services have worked collaboratively towards interoperability. Specific RHIO-related initiatives are described in the table below. The key feature of Hawaii is that stakeholders have a history of working together to solve problems. The next major hurdle is funding. Hawaii’s healthcare providers do not have the resources to fund RHIO formation. Either the state and/or federal governments will need to contribute substantial funding in order for Hawaii’s RHIO to develop fully and expeditiously.

Table 1: ELEMENTS OF RHIO FORMATION IN HAWAII

IT Initiatives & Maturity	Scope of stakeholder Involvement
<p>Hawaii Health Information Corporation (HHIC) was established in 1994 and serves Hawaii as the neutral, fair broker of data and convener for issues related to health information. The Healthcare Association of Hawaii is a founding member of HHIC and continues an active role in its development and governance. Since 2000, HHIC has operated the HIPAA Readiness Collaborative including 60 organizations across the continuum of care. HHIC is a business associate of all acute care hospitals in the state, and regularly works with hospitals, health plans, public health, Medicaid, and physicians on issues related to improving health status, patient safety, quality and cost-efficiency.</p>	<p>Board members and stakeholders include: virtually all Hawaii hospitals, major Insurance carriers, State Departments of Health, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, and all healthcare related organizations.</p>
<p>Hospital and Physician IT Systems Since 2002 Hawaii has planned for and is fortunate to have 3 of its 4 major hospital systems (including Kaiser) with installed EPIC systems. The state hospital system (HHSC) plans to install a statewide EMR through out its acute and long-term care hospitals. Kuakini, St. Francis, and Castle Medical Centers have Cerner systems. Hawaii’s largest Insurance carrier has, thus far, installed Allscripts e-prescribing in a third of practicing physician offices and is piloting an EMR system with private physicians. Various other physician EMR and office management systems are found in practices through out Hawaii.</p>	<p>All hospitals, private physicians and clinicians throughout the state</p>
<p>The Holomua Project, “Improving Patient Hand-Offs in Hawaii”, is funded by Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality grants dealing with the planning and implementation of health information exchange. The Holomua Project is a collaborative, patient, and community driven process for HIT planning that focuses on examining how information can best be shared between systems during transitional care to best improve patient safety, continuity and quality of care.</p>	<p>UH School of Medicine AlohaCare Cancer Research Center of Hawaii Community Clinic of Maui Hawai’i Medical Services Association Hawai’i Pacific Health Kaiser Permanente Kalihi Pālama Health Center Pacific Telehealth & Technology Hui Pali Momi Medical Center Patient & Community Advocates Queen Emma Clinic State of Hawai’i Legislature The Emergency Group, Inc. The Queen's Medical Center University of Hawai’i College of Business Waianae Coast Comprehensive Hlth Center</p>

<p>The Adoption Gap project was funded in late 2005. The not-for-profit arm of the Hawaii Medical Association, which received a grant from the Physicians' Foundation for Health Systems Excellence for the three-year Bridging the Adoption Gap project. It will help physicians with software expenses and training to create patient care registries. It is intended to improve the care of patients with chronic diseases. This is a three phase project whose objective is to get 100 independent private practice doctors in small (less than 10) groups, started either using electronic 'registry' or an Electronic Medical Record system with registry features. The broad objectives are to discover and overcome the barriers to adoption; build IT infrastructure in small practices that might not otherwise get started; and to advance chronic care management and preventive care.</p>	<p>Hawaii Medical Association, 100 independent physician practices</p>
<p>Hawaii Health Information Exchange (HHIE) In early 2005, the Hawaii Life Sciences Council http://www.hawaiilifesciences.org/ was tasked by Enterprise Honolulu, the Kamehameha School, the University of Hawaii, and the Hawaii Department of Business & Economic Development to initiate the development of a plan to stimulate growth in the Hawaii Healthcare Industry. A very significant, directly related outgrowth of this effort was the formal convening of a group of health industry leaders – The Hawaii Health Information Exchange (HHIE) – now a 501-(c)-3 organization. HHIE is calling on the Hawaii healthcare community to come together and promote widespread, full digital connectivity for the state of Hawaii. HHIE is structured in a manner which facilitates obtaining of state, federal, and private foundation funding to further these efforts. HHIC is working directly with HHIE to accomplish its objectives.</p>	<p>Hawaii Business Health Council Hawaii Health Information Corporation HMSA (BC/BS of Hawaii) Hawaii Life Sciences Council Convergence CT Hawaii State Health Planning & Development Agency President & CEO Kuakini Health System Queen's Medical Center Quality Healthcare Alliance Kaiser Permanente Hawaii Health Care Solutions, Oracle Corporation Hawaii Pacific Health Hawaii Primary Care Association Diagnostic Laboratory Services Clinical Laboratories of Hawaii</p>
<p>Pacific Telehealth & Technology Hui/Hawaii Integrated Federal Health Care Partnership Formed in 1999 as a joint partnership of the VA Medical and Regional Office Center in Honolulu and Tripler Army Medical Center to manage joint Telehealth projects involving research, development, prototype, evaluation and technology transfer.</p>	<p>Department of Defense Veteran's Administration Native Hawaiian Health Systems University of Hawaii</p>