

Community Resources

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Purpose

- In rural communities health care options are limited without traveling a long distance. The rural populations can benefit from (HIT) Health information technology and it's ability to improve the safety, effectiveness, quality and delivery of healthcare services to the patient.
- Barrier for telehealth for rural clinics:
 - Clinic have limited resources for setting up of the HIT or HER (electronic health records).
 - Limited funds for training of the use of electronic data
 - Limited broadband internet in rural areas
 - Difficulty finding and connecting with qualified candidates
 - Difficulty in retaining staff with EHR or HIT skills
 - Prohibitive cost of consultants and vendors who understand the HIT needs in rural areas.



Benefits HIT and EHR

- Improvement of quality, effectiveness, safety and delivery of healthcare services to rural communities.
- Connection of rural patients and providers in remote areas to specialist in urban areas.
- Technology that stores, secures, retrieves and transfers protected health information electronically within the healthcare systems and community settings.
- Key components of HIT can include:
 - Electronic health records (EHR) for patients, instead of paper records
 - Secure digital networks to send and deliver up-to-date records whenever and wherever the patient or clinician may need them
 - Electronic transmittal of medical test results
 - Telehealth applications to increase access to providers
 - Confidential and secure patient health portals for patients to access their personal health information online .
 - Electronic communication between healthcare providers, as well as patients
 - Electronic prescribing and ordering to help avoid medical errors
 - Decision support systems to provide clinicians with information on best practices and treatment options to improve quality of care
 - Mobile devices and tablets to update patient records in real time and document at the point of care



Legal and Ethical Issues

Legal **Legal issues revolve around regulating the use of these systems and monitoring their impact to assure that they are used safely and properly.**

Security

Secure system for health information so that hackers can not access the data

Ethical

Key ethical issues revolve around principles of providing effective and safe care and avoiding harm.



Recommendations

- Rural Health Care Program assists with funding to eligible health care providers in order to purchase telecommunications and broadband service necessary for health care of their patients.
- Consists of two programs
 - Healthcare Connect Funding which provides for high speed broadband connectivity to eligible providers along with encouragement for formation of state and regional broadband health providers network.
 - Rural Health Care Program assist healthcare providers and eligible non rural providers that are members of a consortium that has over fifty percent rural health care provider sites. Program gives a sixty-five percent flat discount on different communication services.
 - Business data
 - Internet access
 - Digital service line
 - Private carriage service
 - Dark fiber



Proposal

- Public awareness campaign for an increase in different grants and funding for rural providers to be able to implement health information systems.
- Petition congress for increased funding an awareness of the need for health information systems in rural communities.
- Public awareness of the benefits of health information systems for providers and the benefits for the patients.
 - Encourage patient participation in accessing the systems



Monitoring

- Monitoring the reaction by congress on the petition on a continuous basis.
- Monitor the public awareness campaign for increased awareness of public in the need and benefits of health information systems to rural communities.
- Six month review of participation in using healthcare information systems by both providers and patients.



Benefits of HIT to patients

- HIT helps to get accurate information into the hands that need it. Benefit in care coordination between providers, organizations, insurance companies and specialist. Helps in the transferring of information reducing the risk of medical mistakes. Care team has access to the same information and most up to date information for care planning and for emergency situations.
- Reduces paperwork at providers office or hospital
- Reduces unnecessary testing and procedures. For example having lab work at once place and using the health information system makes the results available to all your providers resulting in unnecessary testing and cost.
- Collaboration between providers through health information systems allows them to see what other providers have done or prescribed to you so they can avoid adverse affects for the patient.
- Convenient access to your health records so you can keep track of your healthcare and can also allow communication directly and securely with the health care provider.



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