

The HIE Marketplace: Making the Right Choice

Before entering the examination room to see the next patient, suppose a provider is able to access the patient's electronic health record (EHR) that includes

efficiency and workflow as well as improving coding and charge capture, but the move to EHRs is just the beginning. The optimization and Meaningful Use of EHRs require that they be connected, from provider to provider or any connection of hospital, lab, pharmacy or provider.

secure connection between two trusted entities, where information is "pushed" by secure e-mail from one entity to another. This might involve receiving lab results, sending a care summary to a patient's specialist, submitting patient data to a state registry or referring a patient to another provider.

(HIO) – in Arizona, the statewide HIO is the Health Information Network of Arizona (HINAz). HINAz is a collaboration of health care organizations throughout the state and is expected to begin operations soon.

Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC) through



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a hospital ER admission in Iowa last week, recent visits to a pulmonologist and cardiologist as well as lab results from yesterday. A complete picture is at his or her fingertips – in seconds. Sound like something from the future? Actually, that future is already here for some providers and is on its way for many others.

Health care is changing rapidly with the move by providers, clinics and hospitals from paper records to EHRs. EHRs are increasing

Enter health information exchange (HIE) – the sharing of health information that allows medical practices, hospitals, labs and other health care providers to exchange data securely with the aim of giving providers more up-to-date and comprehensive patient data to improve care and cut costs, and ultimately, to connect all providers across the country.

While the HIE infrastructure can be complex, there are two basic ways of securely exchanging patient information. Depending on the needs and resources of a practice, one may be a better place to start than another. One type of exchange, sometimes called the "push" approach or Direct exchange, is a

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The other, sometimes called the "pull" approach or robust exchange, is where comprehensive patient data is available via a secure platform that collects all data for a patient and where providers "pull" information from that platform as needed. The organization that facilitates this type of exchange is called a health information organization

the Arizona Regional Extension Center (REC) is assisting more than 2,000 Arizona providers with the adoption and Meaningful Use of EHRs. In collaboration with the REC, AzHeC just recently began administering a program under the direction of the State of Arizona and the Arizona Strategic Enterprise

Technology office (ASET) to develop a Health Information Exchange (HIE) Marketplace in Arizona. The goal of the Marketplace is to provide viable options for HIE to all Arizona providers and to assist providers in participating in secure HIE. The first phase of the HIE Marketplace is developing a marketplace for the Direct approach, based on services offered by health information service providers (HISPs). These HISPs will facilitate Direct messaging between two trusted entities according to nationally recognized standards, enabling Arizona health care providers to exchange health care information in a secure, simple and

inexpensive manner over the Internet. AzHeC began a process of reviewing HISP applicants in February, and the approved group of HISP vendors that meet a minimum set of specifications and requirements will be published in April when the first phase of the Arizona HIE Marketplace will be launched.

In the patient visit scenario described above, information might be available to the provider through either a Direct or robust HIE approach. In the Direct approach, it would require all previous providers to “push” information to the provider which would require some

communication or request to initiate the secure exchange. In the robust approach, the provider might be able to “pull” the latest patient health information from an HIO such as the Health Information Network of Arizona, but he or she would have to be connected to the HIO through the EHR system in his or her office or would have to have “viewer” access to the information in the HIO. Also, he or she would have to actively look for updated patient health information through the HIO. In other words, providers not only will need to select the right HIE tool for their practice, they will need to learn how to use the HIE tools to get

the best information and value out of the tool they select.

Look for information and assistance on HIE from AzHeC through our website (www.azhec.org) and in webinars and educational offerings in 2012 and beyond. **AM**

About Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC): AzHeC is a statewide non-profit charged with leading Arizona's establishment of health information infrastructure (HII), including adoption of electronic health records and health information exchange. Learn more at www.azhec.org.

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