

Iowa e-Health Project

Iowa Health Information Technology Plan

July 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We live in an era in which information technology has tremendous potential to transform the delivery of health and medical care. Technology used to support health-related functions is broadly known as health information technology (health IT). Electronic health records (EHR) are used to collect and store all relevant patient health information. Generally, EHRs go beyond simply providing a digitized record of the patient visit. EHRs serve as a mechanism to bring evidence-based knowledge resources and patient information to the point of care to support better decision-making and more effective care processes. Health information exchange (HIE) involves sharing health records across the boundaries of individual practice and institutional health care settings. The collaborative effort to plan and promote the adoption and use of EHRs in Iowa, and to share clinical data through an electronic HIE, has come to be known as the Iowa *e-Health* Project.

The planning that has taken place in Fiscal Year 2009 to develop the Iowa Health Information Technology Plan has resulted in a defined vision for the Iowa *e-Health* project with specific goals and objectives necessary to implement a secure statewide HIE.

In the coming year, Iowa Department of Public Health and the Electronic Health Information Executive Committee and Advisory Council plan to:

1. Facilitate and support workgroup meetings and convene regular Executive Committee and Advisory Council meetings to further define and execute project activities.
2. Determine cost requirements to develop the HIE infrastructure and support project activities.
3. Pursue federal and state grant programs (e.g., American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Health IT grants) and other potential funding streams to secure startup and ongoing funding for the statewide HIE.

HIEs have significant start up and ongoing funding needs. It will take many resources beyond the current volunteer workgroups to accomplish all the goals and objectives of the Iowa *e-Health* project. Critical activities, such as the HIE infrastructure, cannot move forward without funding and will delay progress in Iowa.

Stakeholders involved in developing the Iowa Health Information Technology Plan know it is time for the entire state to come together to make real changes to the health care system with electronic health records and health information exchange. These health IT tools are the focus of the Iowa *e-Health* project, a collaborative, multi-stakeholder initiative committed to advancing health reform in Iowa. Data-driven health care decision-making through health IT will elevate the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care available to current and future generations in Iowa.

EXCERPT: IOWA HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PLAN

For the full report visit http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr_committees/electronic_health_info.asp or call (515) 281-8960.