



## Top Ten Success Factors for Community HIE Overview

Recognizing the need for strong leadership to support the transformation of community health IT connectivity from theory to reality, the Center for Community Health Leadership (the Center) was established by Misys Healthcare Systems to guide communities through the process of building health information exchanges (HIE).

“By leveraging the expertise and diverse views of our Advisory Board, the Center will provide the guidance, tools and resources community leaders need to build an effective HIE,” said Leigh Burchell, Director of the Center for Community Health Leadership. “This guidance will be conveyed through our Thought Leadership Series, which encourages the collaboration necessary for successful HIE by addressing and accommodating the views of diverse audiences. The Thought Leadership Series is based on the guiding principle that a win-win HIE is not only attainable but can show a measurable return.”

The framework of the Thought Leadership Series is the Top Ten Success Factors for Community HIE, which provides guidelines for the creation of community-based HIE. Each Success Factor represents a pivotal point on the path to achieving community-wide information exchange.

### *Success Factor One: Identify the Value Proposition for Each Community Stakeholder Group*

The first step to building an effective HIE is defining the community and identifying the individual stakeholders that will be impacted by information exchange. A typical community will include healthcare organizations of various forms, including physician practices, hospitals, health systems, and long-term and home-care agencies, as well as individual providers, patients, payers and employers. The community as a whole—the collective group—should also realize some benefits following the establishment of any HIE activities.

“Each stakeholder within the community will have its own unique value proposition, which is critical to identify,” said Blackford Middleton, MD, MPH, MSc, Corporate Director of Clinical Informatics Research and Development and Chairman of the Center for Information Technology Leadership at Partners HealthCare System. “Doing so creates the foundation upon which the plan for community HIE should be developed. To benefit the community as a whole, a successful information exchange must be built in a manner that accounts for and serves the needs of each stakeholder group individually and allows all, collectively, to share in the benefit.”

While patients and payers may value the reduction in duplication of services and improvements in the coordination of care that typically result from a properly integrated HIE, healthcare organizations and providers may place a higher value on improved efficiencies in the transfer of services and cost containment and reduction. Employers, on the other hand, may potentially see a benefit from the reduction in premiums made possible through the cost savings realized from a streamlined care process with fewer adverse events and less duplication of services. Additionally, all groups can benefit from improved management of chronic conditions, shorter physician office and emergency room wait times, and reduced medication errors.

#### **Additional Resources:**

*The Value Of Health Care Information Exchange And Interoperability* by Jan Walker, Eric Pan, Douglas Johnston, Julia Adler-Milstein, David W. Bates, and Blackford Middleton.



### *Success Factor Two: Define the Common Goals of HIE*

Reaching consensus on a community vision and purpose and developing a set of goals that achieve that vision are critical elements of HIE success. The community must identify the issues and problems that the HIE initiative is meant to resolve, then develop strategies to overcome these barriers. A defined communal vision is essential and foundational to this stage.

The shared vision must include the overarching goals, reflect consensus on priorities of community benefit, address areas of potential conflict and specify that the overall good for the community as a whole is the ultimate measure of success. This allows common goals to be established that transcend differences between stakeholder expectations and place the focus on those priorities that will benefit the community. By reaching consensus on the issues of trust and defining success measures, each stakeholder will be able to monitor their levels of success and identify areas of difficulty.

The most important shared goals of HIE systems are improved patient safety and quality of care, enhanced revenue cycle performance, reduced costs and inefficiencies, and improved communications across the care continuum. Improving patient safety and quality of care is foremost, and achieving this will lead both directly and indirectly to enhanced revenue for the practices involved. Additionally, by agreeing to share implementation tips and best practices, these practices will be able to realize increased efficiencies and reduced costs much sooner. Finally, all stakeholders can realize the quality and efficiency benefits that come from improved communication among the community.

“To achieve comprehensive community buy-in, it is important to address such issues as potential areas of competition between stakeholders and differences in regulatory and compliance requirements,” said Michael Fleming, MD, FAAFP, Senior Medical Editor for Antidote Education Company. “This levels the playing field and allows the focus going forward to be centered squarely on implementing those HIE strategies that benefit the community first, yet still address individual stakeholder needs.”

### *Success Factor Three: Open Dialogue on Differences*

The establishment of common goals does not negate the need for ongoing open dialogue on differences between stakeholder values and expectations. Connecting a community begins with communication between all stakeholders—regardless of their stance on HIE. Open communication facilitates education on the HIE process and goals, enables the community to identify and address disruptive factors and possible barriers to success at every level, and allows for the formation of an effective governance structure. Establishing a well-articulated governance model early in the process is critical to adoption success for the initiative.

“Maintaining ongoing communication among all stakeholders is the only way to effectively attend to any disruptions or obstacles that may arise throughout the process,” said Ted Wiegand, Executive Director, Hillcrest Management Services Organization. “Discussing differences in tolerance for such factors as competition, risk, fluidity and innovation helps improve the success of HIE. In order for the exchange of information to truly contribute to the common good—and yield a measurable improvement in patient quality and financial efficiency—it is imperative to keep communication open so that group conflicts are not allowed to impede progress.”



#### *Success Factor Four: Securing Stakeholder Engagement for the HIE*

The stakeholder outreach process involves creation of a formal education program designed to communicate the HIE value proposition as it pertains to each facet of the healthcare community.

The outreach process can be used to gather additional input on such issues as expansion of services, service level agreements, technology, budgeting, risk assessments and benchmarking.

"The goal of outreach activities should be to encourage collaboration, ensure comprehensive stakeholder representation, drive use and utilization of HIE, secure material commitments, and identify potential partnerships and alliances," said David Merritt, Project Director, Center for Health Transformation.

#### *Success Factor Five: Community-Based Governance of the HIE*

The next step in the scoping process of establishing a successful, sustainable health information exchange is launching the structure necessary to carry the HIE initiative forward by incorporating lessons learned. Participants should leverage the mileage gained from the preceding steps taken by the community and include representatives from all areas of the community, with special emphasis on clinicians from different types of medical organizations. The community may elect to establish a hierarchy of committees and subcommittees, with the possibility of a physician advisory group specifically focused on clinical issues such as which type of clinical data will be shared, if not all.

"This includes establishing clearly defined policies and a governance structure representing key stakeholders for transparency. It may also involve creating a community advisory board for ongoing outreach and a decision making process to align incentives and ensure adherence to their strategic roadmap leading to a common vision from clinical, financial and social perspectives," said Richard Bakalar, MD, Chief Medical Officer, IBM Global Healthcare.

#### *Success Factor Six: Community Roadmap for HIE*

The Community Roadmap provides strategic and tactical direction to manage community HIE goals. Within the operational process, it is important to identify common goals and also establish and track a set of clearly defined milestones. The assessment and promotion of interim measurable goals is critical to building and sustaining stakeholder engagement throughout all stages of the HIE initiative. The ability to substantiate the effectiveness of HIE is essential to its success during and after implementation.

"By creating a strategic roadmap consisting of phases of benchmarks, baseline information, goals and timelines for achieving predetermined milestones, the leadership of the HIE can demonstrate measured successes and early wins, which are key to maintaining stakeholder involvement, generating community buy-in and celebrating success," said Archelle Georgiou, MD, Executive Vice President of Strategic Relations, UnitedHealth Group.



### *Success Factor Seven: Hands-On Business Model for HIE*

A solid, sustainable business model is essential to the long-term success of any HIE and requires stakeholders and leaders to adopt a business mentality. In developing the model, communities must first assess the business case and identify risks. Establishing a realistic budget that effectively allocates available resources and includes consideration for appropriate levels of marketing is also critical at this phase.

Despite its challenges, it is important that this step of the HIE process not be put off. Even as data begins to flow between clinicians, a long-term lack of funding or a poorly developed business model will eventually derail a project. Planning for ongoing sources of support past any initial grant money that may be seeding the project needs to begin early in the process, as issues here often begin to percolate well in advance of impacting the project.

“When possible, glean information on what is effective from existing models rather than reinventing the wheel,” said Janet Marchibroda, Chief Executive Officer, eHealth Initiative and Foundation, and an informal consultant to the Center. “Also important is identifying where the leadership can turn for guidance in working through the issues involved in designing the business model.”

### *Success Factor Eight: Secure and Initiate HIE Contracts*

Properly negotiated and executed HIE contracts can mean the difference between a financially sustainable initiative and one challenged by red ink and missed deadlines. Establishing service level agreements that are tied to previously defined benchmarks and milestones can ensure that the HIE timeline and stakeholder expectations are met. Take advantage of group purchasing opportunities or economies of scale that may be available by leveraging the buying power of stakeholders, partnerships and alliances.

### *Success Factor Nine: Identify Internal and External HIE Resources*

Knowing the central, group and community resources that are available to help support the HIE is invaluable to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the initiative. Training and support programs for HIE stakeholders should be developed to operationalize the rollout of the HIE.

The best practices from other communities who have been through the HIE process is an essential external resource. Lessons learned from other sites provide a set of guidelines for navigating through issues and developing alternative solutions to HIE roadblocks.

Forming a community advisory board comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders provides the leadership needed to guide HIE development and ensures varying perspectives are presented and addressed throughout the initiative. Additionally, integrating a neutral facilitator who understands the national HIE landscape, brings expertise from other sites and does not have a stake in the community is advantageous to keeping the process moving forward and diffusing potentially disruptive situations quickly and effectively.



“Identifying HIE resources begins with a solid knowledge and assessment of the community environment that accounts for political, social and economic interests,” said Gary Davidson, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Hospital of Saint Raphael. “Accommodating rather than ignoring or even trying to fight this topography ensures that community resources are leveraged in a way that benefits all stakeholders, resulting in a stronger consensus across the group.”

*Success Factor Ten: Measure Success and ROI*

The ability to measure success and the return on stakeholder and community investment on an ongoing basis is the best way to ensure continual, long-term support for the HIE initiative. This is accomplished by creating a baseline that serves as an anchor point for comparative success, then implementing a formal review process that measures results from the clinical, financial and social perspectives. Among the suggested metrics are cost of care, patient experience, waiting lists, administrative costs within area organizations, duplication of services, preventive care or procedure tracking throughout the continuum, and quality measures.

“Whatever the final metrics are that a given community elects to track, they should take into consideration the needs of the stakeholders to continue supporting HIE at the appropriate levels,” said Leigh Burchell.