

POSTER ABSTRACTS

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Chronic Disease 13

Development of a Community-based Health Information Collaborative

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Background: Although sophisticated health information technology (IT) has been available for more than thirty years, much of the healthcare industry has been slow to implement it and has continued with the familiar paper-driven processes that are expensive and ineffective in supporting quality care. It is widely believed that IT offers an opportunity for major improvements in quality and efficiency. This presentation will describe a large community-wide implementation project to link healthcare data across multiple health plans.

Methods: The New Mexico Health Information Collaborative (NMHIC) is a community-wide initiative to enhance healthcare coordination among patients and providers, improve chronic disease outcomes, reduce unnecessary healthcare costs, and provide benefits to patients, providers, and employers by utilizing a shared information technology system. NMHIC will build a virtual database linking all administrative (claims) healthcare data from all health plans and health systems in the area as well as incorporating disease guidelines agreed upon by the community. Specifically, NMHIC will:

- o Assist patients with chronic disease (diabetes and pediatric asthma) to become more effective participants in their care through direct web access to their personal healthcare information.
- o Assist physicians and other healthcare professionals to provide better care through enhanced access to comprehensive information and the systematic use of disease-specific reminders and feedback.
- o Provide large employers aggregate reports on the prevalence of specific chronic diseases among their employees to guide them in targeting health education programs.

Results: During the initial six month phase of this three year project, we will focus on three specific areas: bringing together all the stakeholders (health systems, health plans, providers, school nurses, patients and employers), conducting a user needs assessment to support the design of the web based tools, and the development of an IT prototype. As the project matures and the technology tools are fine tuned, the evaluation will measure user satisfaction as well as the impact on health processes and outcomes.

Conclusions: The first steps toward a community-wide health information exchange system have been met with great interest, acceptance, and enthusiasm by all stakeholders (employees/patients, employers, providers, health systems and plans) in the greater Albuquerque area.