



NATIONAL
RURAL HEALTH
RESOURCE CENTER

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY VIRTUAL KNOWLEDGE GROUP

Introductory Conference Call

June 8, 2011

Participants: Terry Hill – Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC), Tracy Morton – TASC, Kate Stenehjem – TASC, Edwina Ducker – Maine State Office of Rural Health, Scott Daniels – Hawaii State Office of Rural Health, Shawnda Schroeder – North Dakota Center for Rural Health, Mike McNeely – Office of Rural Health Policy

Action Items

- TASC to send a group participation list including contact information to group members
- If you are interested in participating in additional Virtual Knowledge Groups, please contact Nicole Clement at nclement@ruralcenter.org
- If you are interested in being the vice-chair, please contact Kate Stenehjem at kstenehjem@ruralcenter.org
- TASC to take issue areas identified and develop into a ranking survey for group members to prioritize importance. Survey results will be used to guide group interest in issues to pursue. Results will be shared with the group and discussed in person at the National Flex Conference.
- Participate in Introductory Webinar on Flex Program Forum scheduled for Friday, June 17, 2011 at 2:00pm Central Time. Webinar will be recorded. More information to come via email.

Minutes

Welcome and introduction of call participants

Review of Virtual Knowledge Group Purpose

- Provide a vehicle for discussion of Flex-related topics
- Build knowledge through shared experiences and lessons learned
- Contribute to a collection of Flex information, resources, and models
- Serve as key information group to provide input to TASC, the federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP), Flex Monitoring Team and policy makers
- Not meant to be redundant with previously established national groups
- Groups should focus on topics in the context of the Flex Program

Participants

- Voluntary participation with active engagement and participant contribution
- Limited to State Office of Rural Health Directors, Flex Coordinators, other key State Flex Program personnel, staff from ORHP, TASC, Flex Monitoring Team, TASC Advisory Committee and other federal grantee partners

Function of the Virtual Knowledge Groups

- Driven by activities and communication from group participants, with support from TASC staff
- Chaired by State Flex Program volunteer. Kevin Driesen has been invited to chair the group. Looking for a vice-chair. If you are interested, please email Kate Stenehjem at kstenehjem@ruralcenter.org
- Group will make decisions collectively about work or issues to address and will decide collectively about methods to communicate
 - o TASC can provide support for quarterly conference calls, if desired
 - o Group can also communicate via email and the Flex Program Forum
- Flex Program Forum is a web-based discussion forum, accessible to the same audience as the Virtual Knowledge Groups, where Flex Programs can log in and discuss topics and issues, post and share documents and continue the discussions of the Virtual Knowledge Groups
 - o TASC will host an introductory webinar on the Flex Program Forum on Friday, June 17, 2011 at 2:00pm Central Time. Please look for more information to come via email
- Group will also meet face-to-face at the National Flex Conference on July 12, 2011 in Portland, Maine

Important Issues in the area of Health Information Technology in the Flex Program. Suggestions from call participants included:

- Lack of rural HIT workforce
- HIT workforce skillset/competencies
- Lack of knowledge on how to utilize EHR to full capacity
- Getting providers to utilize CPOE
- HIE with independent hospitals
- Software for larger hospitals is not designed to fit rural hospitals
- EHR finance issues
 - o access to capital
 - o receiving incentives
 - o timeline for receiving incentives
 - o ongoing costs (including staffing)
 - o reimbursement for cloud-based systems
- Developing appropriate hands-on education
- Interfacing

- Broadband capacity
- Vendor priorities are focused on larger systems
- TASC will compile into a survey for the group to complete via email on ranking the importance of the issues. Survey results will be used to guide group interest in issues to pursue. Results will be shared with the group and discussed in person at the National Flex Conference.