Regional Extension Centers: Support for EMR Adoption and Workforce Development

Jennifer McAnally
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HIT Extension Program

• National Extension Center provides support for best practices, collaboration and dissemination of national resources among Regional Extension Centers

• Regional Extension Centers (RECs):
  – Provides assistance to primary care providers in adopting and effectively using HIT
  – Local Workforce support through training and education, internships and promotion of HIT curriculum development
United States Regional Extension Centers

*Note: applicable regions across the nation may also be supported by the Indian Health Board Regional Extension Center, headquartered in Washington DC.*
Improved individual and population health outcomes

Adoption of EHRs

Regional Extension Centers

Workforce training

Meaningful use of EHRs

Medicare and Medicaid incentives and penalties

Exchange of health information

State grants for health information exchange

Standards and certification framework

Privacy and security Framework

Research to enhance HIT

Improved individual and population health outcomes
Meaningful Use

The federal economic stimulus law requires providers to demonstrate meaningful use of EHRs to qualify for Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments.
An Example of Collaboration Needed to Achieve Meaningful Use

Regional Extension Center

order

patient information

specimen

Time to order a lab

Electronic Health Record

Medicaid

Quality

Health Information Exchange

results
Tennessee Infrastructure

- Broadband network reaches all 95 counties.
- Funding support of HIE activities across the state.
- Established Office of eHealth
- Established Statewide eHealth Council
- Formation for Health Information Partnership for TN (HIPTN)
Tennessee’s REC Selected

• On June 17, 2009 The TN eHealth Advisory Committee approved the support of QSource in the development of a Statewide proposal for REC assistance.
  – QSource coordinated application with stakeholders
  – QSource integrated REC services with the State’s strategy for health information exchange (HIE), workforce development and State sponsored grants and loans programs.
## tnREC Partners

- Cumberland Pediatric Foundation
- Community Health Network
- CareSpark
- Memphis Medical Society
- Mid-South eHealth Alliance
- State of Tennessee Office of eHealth
- SharedHealth
- Tennessee Medical Association
- Tennessee Hospital Association
- Tennessee Primary Care Association
- Tennessee Health Information Management Association
- Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians
- Tennessee Medical Group Management Association
- Tennessee American College of Physicians
- TennCare
- Tennessee Board of Regents
- University of Memphis School of Public Health
- University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center
- East Tennessee State University
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Vanderbilt University
- Lincoln Memorial University
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Walter State CC
- Pellissippi State CC
- Nashville State CC
- Nashville Career Advancement Center
tnREC Mission and Vision

**Mission**
To help practices select and successfully implement certified EHRs to achieve meaningful use status, participate in a statewide HIE and improve the quality of care for all Tennesseans.

**Vision**
To create and enhance programs, services and collaborative relationships that improve healthcare quality.

**GOAL**
To make HIT adoption assistance available to all providers with priority given to small practice primary care providers (PCPs) serving underserved patient populations.

tnREC will facilitate widespread HIT adoption using statewide and individualized educational and technical assistance in coordination with state activities.

**Service Area Profile**
- Total # PPCPs: 5,236
- Total # PCPs: 6,713
- Total # Providers: 10,000

PPCP Recruitment Goal= 1,343
Services & Functions of tnREC

- **Workforce**
  - Partner with local resources to help integrate health IT into the initial and ongoing training of health professionals and supporting staff.

- **Interoperability & HIE**
  - Will assist providers in meeting functional interoperability needs such as electronic exchange of laboratory orders & results.

- **Implementation Support**
  - Provide end-to-end project management support over entire EHR implementation process.

- **Meaningful Use**
  - Provide expert assistance to help bring providers to Meaningful Use.

- **Practice & Workflow Design**
  - Assist practices in improvement of daily operations to help achieve Meaningful Use.

- **Privacy & Security**
  - Implement best practices to facilitate the protection of patient information.

- **Vendor Selection**
  - Assess provider’s health IT needs and selecting/negotiating contracts with vendors or resellers.

- **Outreach & Education**
  - Share knowledge of best practices to select, implement, and meaningfully use certified EHR technology.

RECs will support and serve health care providers to help them quickly become adept and meaningful users of electronic health records (EHRs).
Tennessee REC

HIT Adoption Assistance

- Community Sponsored Vendor Fairs
- Vendor comparisons: usability scores, implementation barriers and service/contract comparison
- Hospital centric HIE support in rural areas
- Best practices in EHR Implementation, confidentiality, and security
- “Meaningful Use” certification and Medicaid grant application support
Tennessee REC Structure

Director

Manager East
  - Provider Relations
  - HIT Specialist

Manager Middle
  - Provider Relations
  - HIT Specialist

Manager West
  - Provider Relations
  - HIT Specialist
Tennessee Hospitals

40 Eligible Hospitals
- 17 Critical Access Hospitals / 23 Rural Hospitals > 50 beds

• Focus on linking Priority Primary Care Providers (PPCPs) in these areas to HIE.
• Address privacy and security issues with respect to HIE.
• Work with Tennessee Hospital Association (THA) to address educational needs, vendor selection and combine resources.
• Complete tnREC Hospital Plan will be available late December.
The HIT Workforce Problem…

- Estimates based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Education, and independent studies indicate a shortfall over the next five years of approximately 50,000 qualified health IT workers required to meet the needs of hospitals and physicians as they move to adopt electronic health care systems.
Tennessee REC

Workforce Training and Development

• Internship opportunities through cooperative agreements at Technology Centers/Community Colleges

• Training and Certification programs for the current workforce

• Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) to review educational institution HIT curricula and implement improvements
Reasons for Concern...

- Data from a 2010 College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME) survey found [IT] staff levels and capabilities were among the top three concerns for nearly half of all survey respondents.

The tnREC Supporting HIT Workforce Development

- The tnREC has established an *Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC)* to support the statewide HIT workforce development goals outlined by the Tennessee Regional Extension Center (tnREC), the State of Tennessee Office of eHealth Initiatives, and Health Information Partnership for Tennessee (HIP-TN).
ETAC Goals

Given the workforce development goals outlined in the HITECH Act and the “meaningful use” criteria stipulated by HHS, the ETAC’s objectives are to:

- Work in partnership with TN’s universities, community colleges and technology centers to identify best-practices in curricular content related to HIT and EHRs.
- Create a statewide HIT workforce development plan and communication strategy in harmonization with the tnREC and HIP-TN goals and objectives.
- Identify challenges associated with the effective dissemination of educational content for continuing education and annual employee retraining programs.
- Identify future workforce development priorities and directions for improvement and enhancement.
Thank You!

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