



Promoting Interoperability Program Tip Sheet for Providers

Over the last few years there has been a progressive move from paper to digital technology in health care. Georgia is leading the way to incentivize providers that utilize EHRs. The Medicaid Promoting Interoperability (PI) Program (formerly the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program) is a voluntary program administered by the Department of Community Health (DCH). The program is 100 percent federally funded and limited to eligible Medicaid providers.

We understand that you may have questions concerning the transition to an EHR system and we're here to help guide you through the process. As a reminder, all providers must attest to objectives and measures using EHR technology certified for the required year. Below are helpful tips to assist you. Learn more at dch.georgia.gov/program-updates or contact us at 1-800-766-4456 (select Option 4).

Certified Electronic Health Record Technology (CEHRT)

To receive an incentive payment, you must use an EHR that is certified specifically for the EHR Incentive Programs. CEHRT gives assurance to purchasers and other users that an EHR system or module offers the necessary technological capability, functionality, and security to help them meet the meaningful use criteria. Certification also helps providers and patients be confident that the electronic health IT products and systems they use are secure, can maintain data confidentially, and can work with other systems to share information.

The following are several considerations for EHR software comparison that the Regional Extension Centers (RECs) have found useful over the past several months:

- Understand if and how a vendor's product will accomplish the key goals of the practice by test driving your specific needs with the vendor's product. Provide the vendor with patient and office scenarios to customize their product demonstration
- Define implementation support (amount, schedule, information on trainer(s) such as their communication efficiency and experience with product and company)
- Clarify start-up pricing before selecting an EHR system (hardware, software, maintenance and upgrade costs, option of phased payments, interfaces for labs and pharmacies, cost to connect to health information exchange (HIE), and customized quality reports)
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and costs for data migration strategy if desired. Sometimes, being selective with which data or how much data to migrate can influence the ease of transition
- Server options (e.g., client server, application service provider (ASP), software as a service (SaaS))
- Ability to integrate with other products (e.g., practice management software, billing systems, and public health interfaces)
- Privacy and security capabilities and back-up planning
- Linking payments and EHR incentive rewards to implementation milestones and performance goals
- Vendor's stability and/or market presence in region
- Cost to connect to HIE
- Consider costs of using legal counsel for contract review versus open sources through medical associations

Workflow Redesign

Adopting an EHR will change the flow of patients through your organization. A workflow redesign is the process of:

- Mapping out current workflows and analyzing how your organization gets work done (the current state)
- Planning for the future by mapping out how EHRs will create new workflow patterns to improve your organization's efficiency and health care quality (the future state)

Using EHRs can help your organization build a sustainable medical practice. A workflow redesign is important because it helps you get the most value from EHR implementation.

During the workflow redesign process, you should look at all aspects of your organization from an electronic point-of-view to help your organization:

- Maximize efficiencies
- Enhance health care quality and safety
- Remove chaos from your current workflow
- Improve care coordination

Tips for approaching workflow redesign

1. Identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies in your current workflow. Decide which aspects of your workflow need improvement and prioritize them. Then do the work in stages, creating wins along the way.
2. Experiment with a new workflow in small ways, or test different ways of doing a task to identify what works best in your practice. Try using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) method.
3. Listen to staff. What sounds like resistance is often valuable information about a process issue.
4. Use standard workflow templates to get started and visualize how the work gets done. Then customize the templates to show how the process works in your practice.

Assistance through HI-BRIDGE Solutions (formerly GA-HITEC)

DCH has partnered with HI-BRIDGE to assist health care professionals, as well as small and rural hospitals, with the selection, implementation and Meaningful Use of certified EHR systems.

Technical assistance is available to all eligible providers participating in the Medicaid PI Program. For more information about HI-BRIDGE, visit the website at hibridges.org or call toll free at 877-658-1990.