Adventures in Health Information Exchange

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The Genesis

• The Whittier IPA
  – The need to provide services and products for members without attaching requirements
  – The need for clinical integration for contracting and avoiding antitrust issues
  – The MAeHC opportunity (2004-2008)
What took so long?

• The MAeHC process
  – Great learning opportunity with great people
  – Free hardware and software and terrific support: limited choice for small practices
  – Time consuming legal process and review
  – Our own expectations were too grandiose
  – Exclusion from information on actual costs
  – Failure to establish exchange

What took so long?

• Early history after the MAeHC
  • Discontinuation of the minimal system
  • Four years of coming close to signing
    • No references of a major vendor
    • Change the deal about hospital sign-on on the last day
    • Quadruple the price on the last day
    • Finally signing last summer
What took so long?

- After signing
  - Clinician Commitments (marketing)
  - Access to databases
  - Reformatting
  - 17 different vendors
  - Mission and Vision
  - Committees
    - Policy, Usage, Technology

What took so long?

- Documents
  - Mission and Vision Statements
  - Operating Principles
  - Policies and procedures
  - Consent and assent
  - FAQs
  - Trifold for marketing
  - Education for clinicians about proper use and legitimate access
  - Internal HIPAA required security documents
  - Business Associate Agreement
  - Service Agreements
  - Mass HIway agreements (HISP to HISP)
  - Vendor SOW and contract
  - EMR vendor interface agreements
What took so long?

- 44 page progress note
- Gibberish
- Sign-up
- Each different practice has a different technical glitch
- Upgrades
- Hosted Environments

Vision and Mission

- OUR VISION
  - The widespread use of the Wellport Health Information Exchange will improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare for all patients in the lower Merrimack Valley and beyond -- in an atmosphere of trust.

- OUR MISSION
  - The Wellport Health Information Exchange (HIE) will provide the communication vehicle to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare for its subscribers and their patients and clients by developing and providing services for managing and exchanging health information in an atmosphere of trust. The HIE will be guided by its Operating Principles which may evolve over time.
Operating Principles

1. Patients always come first.
2. Patient privacy, security and confidentiality are paramount.
3. We dedicate our services to the entire community of medical institutions and patients regardless of affiliations.
4. Clinical data are not shared for purposes other than treatment, quality measurement and improvement, and public health.
5. We will not share confidential business data among institutions or physicians unless requested by the contributor of that information.
6. We will not sell clinical data.
7. Clinical data sharing for research purposes is done only with Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Institutional Review Board approval and specific Whittier IPA Board approval.
8. All committee policy recommendations do not go into effect until approved by the Whittier IPA Board.
9. Any changes to these principles first must be approved by the Whittier IPA Board.

Advantages of an IPA ownership

- Physicians are stewards of the patients’ data
- Ethical use of data for improvement of quality and efficiency
- Instantaneous access to aggregated data
- No physician imprisonment
- Potential income stream for the IPA
- Private Direct addresses
- Helps with MU achievement
Advantages of Regional HIE

- Clinicians can see ALL patients’ data
- No siloes
- Improves health of entire community
- Improves efficiency for entire community
- Ease of referrals
  - You can easily attach other clinical information (that does not come from your own practice) to a direct message over the Mass HIway
- Single patient portal

Where are we now?

- How many practices?
- How many patients?
- How many Direct addresses issued?

- But we are live in production! Take a look right now!
WELLPORT Health Information Exchange

Owned and Operated by the Whittier IPA, Inc.

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