

Workforce Development Working Group Meeting November 28, 2006

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WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

Bill Hayes welcomed the group and all attendees introduced themselves.

What is our Mission?

At the HIT Summit on October 23 the Ohio Roadmap was presented to attendees. The Roadmap gave recommendations on how to implement the adoption of HIT, facilitate interoperability, develop an organizational structure, and facilitate exchange. Attendees at the summit suggested that a workforce development plan be added to the list of recommendations included in the Roadmap. The Workforce Development working group is one of several workgroups to evolve out of the October 23 HIT Summit which will develop a workforce plan or suggest what one should look like.

What do we need to make sure they have the support needed?

Make recommendations to policy makers and for state budget.

Staffing Issues/Barriers

The group discussed issues that providers have identified in terms of workforce development. Staffing issues vary based upon the size of the practice and location; rural versus urban. Large group practices that have experience working with electronic health records are trying to get the best IT by hiring them away from the companies they are currently working for. Providers are spending at least 2 years training newly hired IT professionals on the health care industry. Once IT professionals are trained providers have work hard to keep them from leaving their companies for more money. In small rural practices the implementation and maintenance of IT systems falls to the most technologically savvy physician. These practices do not have money to hire an IT person, even if one were available.

As the skill level of staff increases, staff may want higher salaries or want to change jobs. Rural areas' approach to staffing is to "grow your own" staff. There are not enough people out there to fill this particular niche right now. The reality is that skilled laborers will gravitate to jobs offering the most money until enough trained people are in the field.

Training of Existing Staff

Training of existing staff to use electronic health records is two fold; getting the IT staff to understand healthcare and getting the existing staff to understand technology. Members noted that electronic health records systems that are placed in hospitals may be too complex for a small provider's office. Terri Ulrich noted that the hardware provider for her office spent a lot of time working on the system and it took 2 years before they could see the same volume of patients as they did before the installation of the EHR. Other things to consider are off the self products; are they suitable for providers? Also finances, training, product support, and requirements for the system have to be taken into consideration.

Time is also an issue when using an electronic health record. Navigation of an electronic health record takes longer than using a paper record. Will using an EHR be more efficient in the long run? Providers also need to take into account the time it will take to transition to using an EHR.

There are three categories of employees that should be considered when thinking about workforce development. There are IT professionals that are unfamiliar with the healthcare industry, healthcare workers with IT skills, and healthcare workers who do not have IT skills (the users). Training and development needs to take place on all three levels. A process needs to be put into place to identify healthcare professionals with an IT interest and a process for training IT professionals about the healthcare industry.

It was suggested that public health focus on training their workforce in the areas of leadership, preparedness, and general public health training initiatives. Currently the department of workforce development at Ohio State University School of Public Health does not conduct training for the EHR, but this may be something they take on in the future. It was also suggested that the workgroup contact Joel Saltz with Ohio State University's School of Allied Health Sciences (they do have a medical information management program).

Workforce Development Training Currently Underway in Ohio

There are some workforce development initiatives related to Healthcare IT underway in Ohio. KePRO is conducting a workflow analysis at provider offices under the Eighth Scope of work project to look at how providers can implement electronic health records in their practices. Corporate College (Northeast OH) provides executive training and incumbent working training. This program is a part of Cuyahoga Community College through a Tri-C. Paula Gomez-Farrell informed the group about a health care informatics certification program that covers electronic health record and other health information technology. The cost for the certification program is \$1200 and classes can be taken online or onsite. Kentucky has a program that trains people on the EMR someone from the workforce development group should follow up on this program.

Training of Students

Workgroup members would like to know if training on healthcare IT is a part of the nursing school, medical school, and allied health sciences curriculum. It was noted that recent graduates do have IT skills because they were introduced to it during their academic training.

Bill Hayes reported that the Board of Regents held a meeting on health informatics curriculum and he will follow up with his contact to find out their direction.

Training of Clinical Staff and IT Professionals

Community colleges around the state can help train health care workers and also provide training on the health care industry to computer systems students. Colleges may also want to think about developing an IT help desk that supports provider offices and facilitates student training. Perhaps KePRO and OHIMA would be interested in developing this project. The help desk would be housed at the community colleges and provide internships to students in the IT and healthcare fields. Cheryl Gregg with OHIMA was noted as a contact.

Many providers have continuing education requirements that need to be fulfilled, possibly build IT training into their continuing education requirements. The Utah health information network does a lot of training around standards, HIPAA, privacy and security, etc.

Next Steps

Think about important pieces that would fit into plan.

It will be helpful to get a better understanding about what kind of training is currently available across the state by conducting an inventory of each region. One person from each area should gather information about what is available in their area. Paula Gomez-Farrell will make contact with the Ohio State University Health Informatics Program/School of Allied Medical Professions. Bill Hayes will follow up with Board of Regents.

Additional Questions

What needs to happen to finance workforce development training?

Are there monies available to train people? (example: Florida has several pools of money and one pool allows them to use dollars for training)

What do other working groups see as training issues?

How do you utilize new information created by information systems?

How do we help providers decide to build a system or buy a system?

How do we help providers decide whether to hire new staff or contract work out?

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held in January. The date and time for the meeting will be announced.