

Regional Health Information Exchange Initiatives in Texas

As the nation prepares to make a significant investment in health information technology (HIT) it is imperative that states have a complete picture of the existing HIT landscape. Regional health information exchange (HIE) initiatives that make it possible for multiple providers to share patient data are an important part of this picture.

In January, 2009 the THSA disseminated a census to identify all of the HIE projects across the state in order to provide greater information to policymakers regarding HIT and HIE, and to facilitate a productive dialogue among groups involved in similar projects. Specifically, the census sought to capture projects at any stage of discussion, planning, development, or operation that involve or will involve the electronic sharing of patient-level health information among two or more entities to support the delivery of care. Staff will be verifying this information through telephone interviews.

This paper presents the results of the census. The regional projects includes a short description of the project, a list of the organizations involved, the data and functions that the HIE will or is exchanging, and the HIE's stage of development. These stages correspond with those developed by eHealth Initiative.

CENTEX SYSTEMS SUPPORT SERVICES - AUSTIN

Centex Systems Support Services is a consortium of providers and other entities which have formed a regional 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation to provide information technology infrastructure to support the implementation of a common practice management/electronic health record among traditional safety net providers and permit the sharing of patient data across the provider settings according to agreements established between the participating providers.

- Organizations Involved: Centex Systems Support Services members and the Travis County Healthcare District.
- Data and Functions: Demographic, clinical, imaging, and lab results.
- Stage 4

COALITION OF HEALTH SERVICES

The Coalition of Health Services was established in 1996 as a 501(C)3 corporation in Amarillo, Texas. The Board of Directors represents rural hospitals and acute care facilities that collectively cover the Northern most 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle. The Coalition's network currently provides ISP connectivity for six rural and one tertiary facility and all Coalition hospitals are in various stages of EMR implementation. The Coalition's goal is to create a system where health information data can be exchanged among facilities and providers throughout the region.

- Organizations Involved: Coalition of Health Services members.

- Data and Functions: Demographic, referral, and radiology.
- Stage 4

CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL-HIT - WELLINGTON AND FRIONA

Wellington and Friona are two communities in the Panhandle chosen to serve as demonstration projects for HIT in rural areas. The goal of this project was to improve health care safety, quality, efficiency, and effectiveness through the implementation of HIT. The initial funding for the project came from a grant from the federal Health Resources Services Administration to the Texas Office of Rural Community Affairs and was managed by the Texas A&M Health Science Center Rural and Community Health Institute. The project provided participants with the ability to link community healthcare information and also link to their tertiary care referral center, Northwest in Amarillo. This grant also provided telemedicine connectivity through Texas Tech University.

- Organizations Involved: Collingsworth General Hospital in Wellington, Parmer County Community Hospital in Friona, Northwest Hospital, and Texas Tech University.
- Data and Functions: Encounter data, lab results, electronic-prescribing, and telemedicine connectivity.
- Stage 5

CRITICAL CONNECTION - AUSTIN

Critical Connection's mission is to establish connectivity between patients, physicians, hospitals, other caregivers, and payers and to create a collaborative environment of secure, electronically shared healthcare information. The HIE is beginning to integrate hospital data and has recently introduced a revenue model.

- Organizations Involved: Over 300 physicians in Central Texas.
- Data and Functions: Imaging and lab results.
- Stage 4

DIABETES COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE – CORPUS CHRISTI

The Diabetes Community Collaborative is a community-led effort to impact the incidence of diabetes in the greater Corpus Christi area. The collaborative is working to increase patient involvement and awareness in diabetes management, particularly in uninsured and underinsured populations. In the future, the Collaborative plans to build on past initiatives in Corpus Christi and develop an HIE that can assist providers and patients with diabetes care.

- Organizations Involved: The DCC includes the Department of Health, physician offices, community health workers, community health clinics, pharmacies, labs, Texas A&M School of Nursing, Del Mar College and a variety of social service agencies including the local United Way, Food Bank, Salvation Army, and the American Diabetes Association.
- Data and Functions: The functions to be implemented are still under consideration.
- Stage 2

EXPRESS CONNECT HIE- DALLAS-FORT WORTH

The ExpressConnect HIE is a comprehensive physician-directed Health Information Exchange (HIE) that offers a medical care vision for a patient-centric medical home, where individuals and

families can move easily across the spectrum of primary and specialty care. This HIE will be collecting patient care data from over 800 participating primary care and specialists physicians in Dallas Fort Worth and improve efficiency in clinical practices by offering practitioners and appropriate health officials the ability to track patient outcomes at the individual, practice, and population levels.

- **Organizations Involved:** Founding Members Medical Clinic of North Texas and Heart Place.
- **Data and Functions:** allergies, problem lists, medication, and demographic data.
- Stage 3

GENESIS INFORMATION EXCHANGE- NORTH TEXAS

The Genesis HIE, developed by North Texas' largest independent physician association, offers centralized access to numerous electronic functions of patient care delivery and gives participants a choice of several EMR systems. The program enables physicians to accomplish meaningful use of interoperable EHRs by addressing barriers to adoption including financial and technical support. Genesis also promotes comparative effectiveness through clinical integration, collaboration, and implementation of best practice protocols by specialty.

- **Organizations Involved:** Genesis Physicians Group.
- **Data and Functions:** EHRs, referral management, lab orders and results, e-prescribing, and single sign-on.
- Stage 5

HARRIS COUNTY HEALTH CARE ALLIANCE - HARRIS COUNTY

The Harris County Healthcare Alliance is working to develop a business plan and use case in the Houston market. They hope to leverage some of the technology and programs in place at participating organizations to facilitate an HIE. The Alliance plans to initially focus on uninsured and low income patients.

- **Organizations Involved:** Numerous local health care agencies, hospitals and public clinics throughout the Houston area.
- **Data and Functions:** The functions to be implemented are still under consideration.
- Stage 1

HEALTHCARE ACCESS SAN ANTONIO - BEXAR COUNTY

HealthCare Access San Antonio is a health care consortium serving the medically uninsured in Bexar County that was formed to develop a shared patient database to integrate and coordinate health care for the uninsured.

- **Organizations Involved:** Baptist Health System, Christus Santa Rosa, Methodist Healthcare System, University Health System, Communicare Health Centers, CentroMed, Daughters of Charity Service of San Antonio, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and San Antonio Metro Health.
- **Data and Functions:** Encounter Data
- Stage 5

HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY - MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Heart of Montgomery County is a community collaborative of individuals, organizations, non-profit agencies and providers who are exploring the development of an HIE for Montgomery County.

- Organizations Involved: Working on agreements with area hospitals and clinics.
- Data and Functions: The functions to be implemented are still under consideration.
- Stage 2

HEALTH QUALITY AND INTEROPERABILITY LABORATORY FOR TRAINING (HEALTHQUILT) - HARRIS COUNTY

HealthQuilt is a pilot strategy developed by the University of Texas School of Health Information Sciences to establish a “network of networks” around patient-centered medical homes. HealthQuilt has developed an HIE to facilitate physician-to-physician communication and support community clinics, primary care physicians, ancillary services, and specialists.

- Organizations Involved: 20 participating physicians to date including University of Texas and private practice physicians.
- Data and Functions: EMR, evidence based practice support, messaging, and consultation to specialists for disease management.
- Stage 4

INTEGRATED CARE COLLABORATION - CENTRAL TEXAS

The ICC is a non-profit regional collaborative of hospital systems, clinics, and other providers who provide care for the uninsured and the underinsured in Central Texas. ICC manages and continues to develop the ICare System which offers treatment support and provides data for research and program analysis on the uninsured.

- Organizations Involved: Numerous local health care agencies, hospitals, and public clinics throughout Central Texas.
- Data and Functions: Demographic information, encounter data, medications data, and lab results.
- Stage 7

KLEBERG RURAL HEALTH NETWORK - KLEBERG COUNTY

The Kleberg Rural Health Network seeks to build a continually adapting, open, self-sustaining health information system that can demonstrate quantifiable social, clinical, and economic benefits for county patients and providers. A goal of the project, in addition to preparing physicians to implement electronic medical records, is to implement an HIE focused on improving outcomes for high-prevalence, high-cost chronic diseases.

- Organizations Involved: Three rural health care providers, a children’s health insurance plan, and Texas A&M Kingsville.
- Data and Functions: Lab transactions, electronic prescribing, and clinic registry model that will trigger patient appropriate interventions.
- Stage 4

NORTH TEXAS EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT HIE - DALLAS-FORT WORTH

The Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council and the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation are working with 75 hospital members, medical societies, third party payers, and other ancillary service providers to implement an HIE that will eliminate duplicative medical procedures and focus on patient safety, readmissions, and comparative effectiveness. The Foundation hosts a data warehouse with historical data for member hospitals and has developed a regional master patient index to track, analyze, and study readmissions and comparative effectiveness. A planned subset of this HIE will be to eliminate duplicative procedures and promote better patient safety in emergency departments at many North Texas hospitals.

- Organizations Involved: Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Members and the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation.
- Data and Functions: Encounter data and comprehensive integration strategies.
- Stage 2

NORTH TEXAS HIE/HIE 5 - DALLAS

The North Texas HIE, also known as HIE5, aims to create an electronic exchange of patient information between providers and build a comprehensive master patient index for the county.

- Organizations Involved: The Dallas County Medical Society, ProPath, and several ancillary service providers.
- Data and Functions: Demographic information, lab results, imaging, and medication history.
- Stage 3

SANDLOT - FORT WORTH

SandlotConnect®, which went live in Fort Worth in 2008, serves over a million patients and more than 800 providers. The HIE allows for the flexible exchange of information between physicians, healthcare systems, and future networks. The project seeks to continue to add functionality and improve the existing data and communication infrastructure.

- Organizations Involved: Numerous clinics, hospitals, and local health care agencies, throughout Tarrant County.
- Data and Functions: Electronic-prescribing, imaging, lab results, electronic medical record, continuity of care record, continuity of care document, electronic referral, and secure messaging.
- Stage 6

SOUTHEAST TEXAS HEALTH SYSTEM - RURAL SOUTHEAST

STHS, located in Goliad, is planning a system that will send patient referrals to neighboring metropolitan health care centers. Building on earlier HIE experience, STHS is developing a business process model and a formal HIT governance structure to create a foundation to securing additional funding for development and.

- Organizations Involved: Brazos Port Regional Health System, Matagorda County Health District, Memorial Medical Center in Port Lavaca, DeTar Health System, Lavaca Medical Center, and Columbus Community Hospital.

- Data and Functions: Demographic information, medications, and allergy information for referrals.
- Stage 2

TEXAS HEALTH INFORMATION NETWORK COLLABORATIVE - STATEWIDE

The Texas Health Information Network Collaborative (THINC) is a consortium created to enhance connectivity for expanding healthcare accessibility and availability through the utilization of telecommunications and information services. The THINC HIE project, funded through a Federal Communications Commission grant, will design construct, and maintain a secure, effective, and sustainable broadband telecommunications network.

- Organizations Involved: More than 200 healthcare facilities in the state.
- Data and Functions: The functions to be implemented are still under consideration.
- Stage 2