



Maryland HIMSS HIT Day – Legislative Talking Points

February 7, 2012

Maryland is an innovator and leader in the adoption of Health Information Technology (HIT) by being the first state in the country to connect all acute care hospitals to the state-designated Health Information Exchange (HIE), Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP).

We ask all elected and appointed officials in Maryland to continue enabling providers to improve the health of our citizens through the use of HIT by supporting the following initiatives:

- 1. Continue to support the adoption of the state-designated HIE.** CRISP has the potential to simultaneously improve the effectiveness of and reduce the cost of healthcare to our citizens. By providing access to the total picture of a patient's health and healthcare in emergency departments and other settings, diagnoses can be made more quickly, proper treatment prescribed and duplicate testing reduced.
 - Provide incentives for provider participation.** The initial benefits of participation are generally non-financial, and those that are, generally would accrue to the payers through reduced utilization. However, the cost of participation can be burdensome, particularly to the private practitioners. Therefore, it is critical to incentivize provider participation.
 - Provide funding to aid long-term sustainability.** While CRISP has received funding through the state's hospital rate-setting mechanism, federal stimulus funding expires in 2013. Given the emergence of value-based HIE payment models, it will require more time to create a sustainable funding model. Thus, in order to continue the emerging benefits of HIE adoption in Maryland, it is necessary to extend state funding until financial sustainability can be achieved.
 - 2. Require payers to provide reimbursement for telemedicine services.** Telemedicine is a viable means of delivering health care remotely through the use of communication technologies. Effective use of telemedicine can increase access to health care, reduce health disparities, and create efficiencies in care delivery. Therefore, state-regulated payers should provide reimbursement for health care services delivered through telemedicine to the same extent as they are required to do for face-to-face healthcare services.
 - 3. Support consumer privacy and security balanced with information sharing.** We must balance the need for privacy and security with the benefits of expanded availability and use of protected health information. Maximum benefits of HIE can succeed only if consumers are properly educated on the benefits and risks of sharing their personal health information and providers recognize their essential role in using patient data in a manner that preserves patients' trust.
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