WTxHITREC, Expansion of Health IT Technical Assistance
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Over the past three years there have been great advancements in health information technology (HIT). Specifically, in regards to West Texas, the West Texas Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (WTxHITREC), an organization developed in partnership with the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) to support health care providers located in the 108 most western counties of Texas, has assisted over 1,000 providers and close to 60 hospitals in their efforts to adopt and meaningfully use an electronic health record (EHR). Through the WTxHITREC’s efforts over the last few years, it has played a vital role in fostering the adoption of electronic health records (EHR) and remains committed to continuing these efforts throughout West Texas.

As of November 2013, the WTxHITREC has achieved 100% in ONC program milestones for provider enrollment and go-live on an EHR and now ranks as the #1 Regional Extension Center in the State based on the percentage of providers that have achieved meaningful use. These achievements reflect the dedication of health care providers and hospitals serving West Texas to improve the quality of care through implementing an EHR.

Going forward, the WTxHITREC has begun to work toward sustainability beyond the ONC program and is determined to implement new strategies and rely on its skilled staff to address the EHR needs of West Texas. These strategies include the following:

- Offering a NO-COST technical assistance program to Medicaid eligible cardiologists, endocrinologists, pulmonologists, and psychiatrists who treat the top four chronic conditions with the greatest impact to client health and Medicaid costs in Texas – diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and mental illness. This Medicaid Physician Specialist Program has been federally funded through the Texas Human & Health Services Commission (HHSC).

- Continuing to provide a full service line of health IT support and practice management solutions for primary care providers, specialists, and hospitals, including:
  - Meaningful use gap analysis
  - Incentive audit preparedness and post attestation assistance
  - Medicaid and Medicare incentive payment registration/attestation support
  - Privacy & security best practices, including tools and support to complete required Security/Risk Analysis
  - Stage 1 and 2 meaningful use support
  - Project Management
  - Workflow mapping and redesign
  - Functional interoperability and health information exchange
  - EHR vendor selection, implementation, and go-live support
  - Patient-Centered Medical Home education and support
  - Accountable Care Organization education and support
  - ICD-10 transformation assistance

- Under an additional contract with HHSC, supporting a planning process that convenes interested stakeholders and healthcare leaders to form a West Texas Health Information Exchange (HIE) Advisory Committee responsible for identifying (an) HIE solution(s) for the targeted West Texas counties and a governance structure for that/those HIE(s).

- Through collaboration with the Area Health Education Center of the Plains and Midland College, the WTxHITREC will be providing service-learning and apprenticeship as a component of the Rural HIT Grant to focus on developing the health care providers of the future as well as supporting current health professionals in West Texas.

There is no doubt that providers and hospitals will face difficulties in meeting Stage 2 requirements and implementing electronic health and quality care initiatives; however, the WTxHITREC is committed to acting as the trusted advisor for West Texas and supporting these ongoing efforts to ultimately provide better, safer quality of care.

For more information on WTxHITREC services, the Medicaid Physician Specialist Program, and other initiatives, call (806) 743-7960, email info@wtxhitrec.org or visit www.wtxhitrec.org.

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