



HEALTH INFORMATION SECURITY & PRIVACY TOOLKIT

Physicians: It's time to connect to electronic health information exchange

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From hospital corridors across the country to full page advertisements in *USA Today*, it appears that just about everyone is calling for the healthcare industry to go electronic. While most industries have long ago updated, the medical community – entrusted with the lives of millions of patients annually – is slower to adapt.

Numerous efforts are underway to fix a system far too reliant on paper records. One such initiative aims to provide information about privacy and security to health care providers in order to encourage their participation in electronic health information exchange.

The Health Information Security & Privacy Collaboration Provider Education Toolkit (HISPC-PET), a federal initiative launched in January 2009 in eight pilot states, focuses on safe, private, and secure electronic health information exchange technology for health care providers. Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and Wyoming are part of the effort.

The Web-based toolkit, found at www.Secure4Health.org, provides information on electronic health information exchange and tools and resources to help physicians get connected electronically. Health care providers also can take advantage of free continuing medical education credits while

learning more about electronic health information exchange technology, electronic health record systems, and related security and privacy benefits and challenges.

As long-time advocates, we know health information technology has the potential to offer real-time information at the point of care and greater privacy and security protections. We believe that it offers physicians the opportunity to make better clinical decisions, while avoiding duplication and medical errors.

Not only is the information private and secure, but it will also help improve the delivery of healthcare services. By making health information available to health care providers electronically, anywhere, medical errors and costs can be reduced. It is one way to help improve the U.S. healthcare system.

The initiative consists of a pilot project that runs from January to March 2009. To evaluate its impact on health care providers and the medical community, HISPC will analyze Web site traffic, the number of health care providers taking advantage of free continuing medical education credits, as well as other assessment metrics. The goal is to use the assessment results to design an education and outreach toolkit for health care providers nationwide.

The Provider Education Toolkit is the result of work completed by the Health Information Security & Privacy Collaboration, a multi-year project launched in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The collaboration comprises 42 states and territories and addresses the privacy and security challenges presented by electronic health information exchange through multi-state collaboration.

It's safe. It's secure. It's time. Get connected!

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