Increasing Access to Electronic Medical Records: Need for Personal Health Records in an Interoperable, Affordable Format

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Introduction

- Rising healthcare costs have heightened the interest in finding a more technologically advanced means to exchange and transmit medical data

- Control and rapid exchange of information (health records) can lessen the waste of resources

- Quality and ultimate improvement of safety

- Access to primary and specialty care will increase
EMR System

- Urgent improvements are needed in the accessibility of HIT to transfer and exchange medical information (Health Records)

- Health and Human Services (HHS) have been instructed to develop and implement a nationwide system of transparent interoperable EMRs by 2014

- System would have great impact on cost and resultant access to Medicaid patients
EMR Positives

- Electronic Medical Records (Personal Health Records) are more accurate and verifiable by patient and provider.
- Delays in management of data and improvement in patient care at the point of access decreases cost and errors.
- EMR systems and use of Practice Guidelines increase the quality of care for chronic illnesses.
Availability of Systems have Negative Influence and Barriers

- High initial cost of acquisition and implementation
- Disagreement over who should bear the initial cost
- Uncertain financial returns on the initial cost
- Limited funding by payers for support to providers
- Payment systems that result in most HIT enabled savings going to insurers, patients and government payers
EMR Concerns

- System Security

  - Concern over the value and security of present systems and interoperability of future systems as they evolve
Recommendations

- Removal of anti-kickback rules for systems acquisition and sharing of systems between stakeholders

- Federal funding for physicians to initiate and implement EMR
  - Format Grants
  - Research Development Programs

- Access to inexpensive data exchange systems (until funding is allocated)
  - On-line programs such as GoogleHealth or Kaiser Permanente’s Health Vault
Healthcare Technology Act of 2008

- Need support for passing into law the provisions and funding for

  PRO(TECH) Act of 2008/ H.R. 6357

  The Protecting, Research Optimizing, Treatment, and Easing Communication through Healthcare and Technology Act of 2008
Result of Passing PRO(TECH) Act of 2008

- Codifies the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology
- Provides grants and loans to physicians to ease the burden of adopting health information technology
- Strengthens privacy provisions under HIPPA to require consent to share data as well as notification if patient data is breached