Oregon Has a Long-Term Vision for its HIT Future

Plans track closely with health system transformation

Oregon has a new strategic blueprint for the advancement of health information technology with the September 14 approval by HITOC of Oregon’s Strategic Plan for Health IT.

The 35-page document, developed over the course of 2012 with many opportunities for public input, is particularly focused on the importance of health IT as essential infrastructure for the Health System Transformation initiative currently under way in Oregon.

"It is gratifying to complete a public process that results in a shared vision for the future of health information technology for Oregon," said HITOC Chairman Steve Gordon, M.D., physician executive at PeaceHealth. "With this strategic plan, we've established an ambitious agenda for improving health and health care in our state using a health IT infrastructure."

The health IT strategic plan's vision tracks closely with efforts to establish Coordinated Care Organizations as part of the Health System Transformation Initiative. CCOs will rely on health IT to be successful in sharing health information, measuring and reporting quality and coordinating patient care, among other tasks, noted Carol Robinson, Administrator of Oregon's Office of Health IT and State Coordinator for Health IT.

"There are many tools within health IT that will help make Oregon's latest groundbreaking Medicaid waiver a success, from the secure sharing of electronic medical records among providers to tracking measures of quality," Robinson said. "Importantly, it's not all about health care providers -- Oregon's medical consumers will also benefit from easier access to their medical information to make informed choices about their own health and medical treatment."

The council is required by statute to develop a strategic plan for health IT. HITOC began the strategic planning process in January 2012, with public discussions during HITOC meetings and three webinars to identify the plan’s scope, underlying principles and content areas. The plan includes nine strategies, with accompanying milestones and action steps with the main goal of using health IT to improve the health and health care of Oregonians.

HITOC discussed a final draft of the plan at its September 6 meeting, and held a final vote during a public webinar on September 14. Approval was unanimous.

To see the strategic plan, go to the HITOC website documents page.
**CMS Releases Final Stage 2 Meaningful Use Rules for EHR**

On August 22, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released the Stage 2 Meaningful Use Final Rule. It clarifies requirements for providers and hospitals that are participating in the CMS EHR Incentive Program.

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT also released the 2014 Standards & Certification Criteria (S&CC) Final Rule. Starting in 2014, all incentive program participants, regardless of stage, will have to adopt certified EHR technology that meets the 2014 S&CC Final Rule.

Stage 2 Meaningful Use becomes effective in 2014 and increases most Stage 1 thresholds. All Stage 1 menu measures, except syndromic surveillance for eligible professionals and advance directives for eligible hospitals, were moved to the list of core measures.

Eligible professionals will need to meet 20 objectives: 17 core objectives and three menu objectives. The new rules require eligible hospitals to meet 19 objectives: 16 core objectives and three from the menu.

Stage 2 objectives have a particular focus on patient engagement and electronic access, including requirements that more than 50 percent of all patients seen and more than 5 percent of all patients view, download or transmit their electronic patient information.

That patient engagement requirement is echoed in the ONC’s new Standards & Certification Criteria, part of which requires that EHR technology can provide patients with an online means to transmit summaries in accordance with Direct Secure Messaging standards.

For more information about the Stage 2 Final Rule, see the CMS website’s listing of tip sheets, overviews and comparison tables.

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**Oregon One of Four States to Receive HIT Trailblazer Award**

Technical assistance grant will help develop quality measurement

Oregon has been selected to participate in the Health IT Trailblazer project, which provides technical assistance to plan and develop state-level quality measurement, reporting and feedback infrastructure. The project is sponsored by the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC).

“This is a great opportunity that will give us support and technical assistance so we can think through some of these tough questions,” said Carol Robinson, administrator of Oregon’s Office of Health IT. Oregon will develop a plan by March 2013 that will address data use agreements, data aggregation, risk adjustments and technical requirements to merge clinical and claims data for quality reporting.

NASHP and ONC representatives will be in Oregon October 3 and 4; they will attend the October 4 HITOC meeting for a roundtable discussion about the various options that Oregon could pursue around technology infrastructure issues with HITOC members and representatives of Oregon’s emerging Coordinated Care Organizations.

Other states receiving Trailblazer funding are Massachusetts, Minnesota and Arkansas. Four additional states are expected to be to this program added in coming months.
Direct Secure Messaging Registrations Climb

CareAccord™, which provides statewide health information exchange services in Oregon, saw total registrations for Direct Secure Messaging grow to 68 in August, along with users starting to use this service to communicate outside their own organizations.

Direct Secure Messaging offers a simple, secure and currently free method to send patient information electronically. CareAccord™ is sponsored by the Oregon Health Authority and operated by vendor Harris Corp. For more information about CareAccord™ and its services, including information on how to sign up, see the program’s website, www.careaccord.org.

More Oregonians Covered by CCOs

Most Oregon Health Plan members are being served by a local Coordinated Car Organizations, after five new CCOs became eligible to begin serving OHP clients on September 1.

CCOs are health plans that include all types of providers who have agreed to work together in their local communities to serve Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) members. They are designed to simplify the health system and provide clients with a single point of contact that helps avoid miscommunication and maintains focus on patient needs.

“In Oregon we are showing that it is possible to build a health care system around patients and their providers for better health and reduced costs,” said Governor John Kitzhaber. “These new Coordinated Care Organizations will be leading the way for everyone in our state.”

See the complete list of Coordinated Care Organizations at www.health.oregon.gov.

Oregon seeks grant for innovation center

HITOC has lent its support to Oregon’s application for a State Innovation Model grant from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI). The award, in the range of $20 million to $60 million, would establish an Oregon Innovation Center, which would test delivery system and payment innovations for Medicaid/CHIP and other programs. It would carry this out through learning collaboratives, technical assistance and “innovator agents.” The grant application is due Sept. 24 and CMMI is expected to issue up to five awards on Dec.4.

Articles of Recent Interest

IOM Calls for Better Use of Technology in Health Care (Modern Healthcare)

AHIMA Unveils Tool to Spur PHR Use (Healthcare IT News)

ONC Drops Pursuit of NwHIN Governance (Government Health IT)

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