

Driving Change through Rapid Demonstrations

Save to myBoK

by Linda Kloss, RHIA, CAE, executive vice president/CEO

The American healthcare system is in crisis and consumers are taking notice. Insurance costs are rising at double-digit rates and employers are passing along more of the cost to employees, leading to a recent nationwide strike at GE earlier this year. One in seven Americans is uninsured and federal and state budgets can barely maintain current eligibility for public programs, much less expand it. Quality problems are now well documented and widely publicized, yet there is surprisingly little public outrage or outcry. Further, work force shortages sap resources and morale, the current system is incapable of addressing racial and ethnic disparities, and the baby boomers are getting older. Any way you look at it, it's a pretty bleak picture.

“Paperless” Systems Serve as Examples

In 2002, the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to recommend demonstration projects as a strategy for health system redesign.¹ Five categories of demonstrations are called for: chronic care, primary care, state health insurance, liability, and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. The IOM requested eight to 10 ICT demonstrations of “a ‘paperless’ healthcare system” over the next five years to illustrate short-term goals relating to quality and efficiency and longer-term goals of supporting different and better ways of doing work.

In another 2002 report, the IOM notes that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Department of Defense “have made noteworthy strides in establishing a clinical information infrastructure, and the ability of their programs to measure and improve quality through continuous feedback and the application of computerized decision support systems is superior to what is typically found in the private sector.”² They are real-life demonstrations and the IOM urges that we learn from them. To that end, this issue spotlights the VHA’s electronic health record (EHR) and its effect on HIM functions in “Information Everywhere: How the EHR Transformed Care at VHA,” by Gail Graham, RHIA, Linda Nugent, RHIA, and Kathleen Strouse, MS. In “VA Puget Sound Reaps Benefits of Automation,” AHIMA practice manager Jill Burrington-Brown, MS, RHIA, describes one VA hospital’s experience.

E-HIM Demands Innovation

E-HIM is a rallying cry for reinventing HIM practice to fully realize the benefits of new ways of managing information. Yet healthcare organizations resist change and entrenched stakeholders make the going tough, even when the need for change is compelling. Examples of organizations that are succeeding at profound change are described in “Clinic EHR Streamlines HIM Department,” by Mark Hagland, and “Turning a Physician Practice on Its Head,” by Gina Rollins.

A demonstration project is a bold and innovative way of testing a new idea or approach. It permits rapid results and identification of barriers that will be encountered in full-scale implementation. This approach enables the organizational learning necessary to making broader change. Innovation and change are not optional for organizations today. Demonstration projects produce results that help us make the case for change. As part of e-HIM, let’s engage in rapid demonstrations of new ways of work to speed the pace of effective and high-impact changes.

Notes

1. Institute of Medicine. *Fostering Rapid Advances in Health Care: Learning from System Demonstrations*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2002, p. 3. Available online at www.nap.edu/openbook/0309087074/html/3.html.

2. Institute of Medicine. *Leadership by Example: Coordinating Government Roles in Improving Health Care Quality*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2002, p. 5. Available online at www.nap.edu/openbook/0309086183/html/1.html.

Article citation:

Kloss, Linda. "Driving Change Through Rapid Demonstrations." *Journal of AHIMA* 74, no.3 (2003): 19.

Driving the Power of Knowledge

Copyright 2022 by The American Health Information Management Association. All Rights Reserved.