Health Intelligence Revolution Coming to Long-Term and Post-Acute Care

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By AHIMA's Advocacy and Policy Team

Health information and health intelligence are beginning to have an impact on the daily lives and health of everyone. Technology-enabled, person-centered care is taking hold and transforming the healthcare delivery system, enabling accountability for the patient and challenging providers to incorporate new types of data into the health record. This was the message of the keynote session of the 10th annual Long-Term and Post-Acute Care (LTPAC) Health IT Summit, held this June in Baltimore, MD.

AHIMA partnered with the LTPAC Health IT Collaborative and strategic partners to host the summit, which brought together over 250 key stakeholders, policymakers, researchers, and other professionals from across the spectrum of healthcare to collaborate on healthcare strategy and address issues facing the LTPAC care setting. This two-day summit is the only one of its kind, with thought-provoking, interactive sessions, panel presentations, poster sessions, and exhibits.

One key highlight of the summit was the LTPAC Interoperability and Innovation Showcase. This unique open forum consisting of multiple interactive sessions highlighted innovative approaches to health information exchange with standards-based technology. Of particular interest was the impact of health information exchange on health outcomes, cost, quality of care, utilization, and hospital readmissions.

Health intelligence was the topic of the opening keynote presented by Patricia Flatley Brennan, PhD, RN, the Lillian L. Moehlman Bascom professor for the school of nursing and college of engineering at University of Wisconsin-Madison and program director for Project HealthDesign. Brennan explained that healthcare outcomes will be improved through data-driven information from technology and tools. The abundance of data created from health IT provides significant opportunities for its analysis and transformation into health intelligence.

Brennan was joined by Michael S. Weiner, DO, MSM, MSIST, director of healthcare strategic services at IBM, in a panel presentation on the health intelligence revolution. Together they explored the latest developments and tools in quality measurement, cognitive computing tools, analytics, and governance. The proliferation of health IT data provides opportunities for improved health outcomes when that data is captured, managed, and analyzed to create knowledge and support decision making. Information governance in healthcare is also an essential tool in the management of accumulated health data.

David R. Hunt, MD, FACS, medical director of health IT adoption and patient safety at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), shared how the LTPAC community can leverage the current regulatory conditions and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' "meaningful use" EHR Incentive Program to advance the continuity of care and reduce hospital readmissions. ONC has developed tools to help consumers and issued guidelines and recommended strategies for providers in the hope of advancing interoperable electronic healthcare.

Even though stimulus dollars from the ARRA-HITECH Act were not allocated to LTPAC, standards in health IT have had a positive impact on the safety, efficiency, and quality of the delivery of healthcare in the LTPAC community.

Other popular topics at the LTPAC Summit included policy and legislative updates, payment and service delivery reforms, ICD-10-CM/PCS, interoperability and health information exchange, clinical decision support, and health IT technology progress over the last 10 years.

One example of the progress that has come from health IT was given in a presentation by representatives of the Improving Massachusetts Post-Acute Care Transitions (IMPACT) project. Representatives announced at the summit that their LAND and SEE tool, which helps with the exchange of health information, has reduced hospital readmissions. Massachusetts also has a universal transfer form which has contributed to improved healthcare in the state.

Another session at the LTPAC Summit focused on emerging best practices in digital health IT to facilitate coordination of care and reduce or prevent readmissions. This was presented by Andrey Ostrovsky, MD, CEO of Care at Hand, based in San Francisco, CA. Driven by the shift from fee-for-service to value-based care, their community-based care transitions program uses mobile technology to empower caregivers.

Deborah Green, MBA, RHIA, COO and executive vice president at AHIMA, and Peter Kress, vice president and chief information officer at ACTS Retirement-Life Communities, presented the LTPAC HIT Collaborative's 2014–2016 Road Map. The latest version of the Road Map is designed to provide guidance to stakeholders in the industry on national strategic goals and includes plans for laying the groundwork for a fully connected health system that uses smart data to deploy new delivery and payment systems. The final Road Map is now available at www.LTPACHealthIT.org.

National Health IT Week Raises Awareness with Local, Regional Events

This month will mark the ninth year of National Health IT Week (NHIT Week). During the week of September 15-19 over 400 partners, including AHIMA, will work to bring awareness to the importance of health IT through local and regional events. AHIMA's goal in NHIT Week is to promote and advocate for high quality research, best practices, and effective standards in health information and to actively contribute to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. Through the advancement of health information, especially from electronic health records (EHRs), the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of healthcare is improving.

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