

IG is Critical for Our World of Growing Health-Related Data

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By Ann Meehan, RHIA

In this world of growing health-related data, information governance is not only needed but is crucial to ensure that healthcare organizations can quickly and efficiently manage the data being produced, resulting in information being used effectively for patient care. The latest numbers on predicted growth in healthcare data are staggering. According to ComputerWorld, by 2020:

- There will be approximately 40 zettabytes of data, which is equivalent to 40 trillion gigabytes and 5,200 gigabytes per person.
- Only about 33 percent of data will contain information that might be valuable.
- Only 15 percent of data will be stored in the cloud.
- Most data will be created by machines.

Other information from ComputerWorld includes:

- There is 70 percent data growth annually in the average electronic health record (EHR).
- 20 percent of data may be unusable due to quality issues.
- 90 percent of data was created in the past two years.
- Only 25 percent of stored data has any real business value.
- Data is expected to double every 73 days by 2020.

Where will this data come from? In addition to the legal health record, data will come from various mobile devices, wearables, and outside data sources.

Patient-generated health data (PGHD) is a term that describes health-related data that is gathered by patients and/or their family members to help monitor and address health concerns. PGHD can come from many sources and technologies. HealthIT.gov provides the following examples:

- Health history
- Treatment history
- Biometric data
- Symptoms
- Lifestyle choices

According to an [issue brief](#) from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), “PGHD are distinct from data generated in clinical settings and through encounters with providers in two important ways. First, patients, not providers are primarily responsible for capturing or recording these data. Second, patients direct the sharing or distributing of these data to health care providers and other stakeholders.”

The Internet of Things (IoT) is the common name for the network of physical objects, such as devices and vehicles, that are embedded with electronics and network connectivity, which allows them to collect and exchange data. The IoT will allow a broader range of healthcare monitoring and care by allowing patients to communicate health information via these technologies. It is predicted that seniors will be able to live in their homes longer due to ongoing monitoring by these types of devices. *HealthData Management* reports that the IoT can refer to something as simple as fitness trackers like the FitBit or smart scales, something specialized such as blood pressure monitors or glucometers, or even something as complex as pacemakers, home dialysis machines, and social networks.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. It is believed that SDOH impacts the health of individuals and understanding these can help predict and treat conditions. The CDC provides the following examples of SDOH:

Conditions

- Social
- Economic
- Physical

Environments and Settings

- School
- Church
- Workplace
- Neighborhood

There are many sources for SDOH, including Chronic Disease Indicators, Community Health Status Indicators, and Health Indicators Warehouse, among others. SDOH can be captured simply through employer annual health screening surveys that ask questions about practices related to seatbelts and sunscreen, amount of sleep, smoking and alcohol use, and exercise and diet.

Information governance in health care provides the formal structure around all types of information produced by various mechanisms and technologies, and maintained on various media. Information governance will ensure that data definitions, data mapping, data storage, and technology are addressed via policies. Information governance ensures a more agile organization that can quickly adjust to accept data from the many resources available today and in the future.

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