Effectively Using Health IT to Maximize Value

Effective use of health IT helps make the right information available to the right people at the right time, which can fuel an upward spiral of continuous improvement, moving from current care toward optimal care.

Technology’s role in health care has expanded greatly over the last 20 years. Our ability to store, share, and analyze health information is directly tied to improved technology. The use of technology increases provider capabilities and patient access while improving the quality of life for some patients and saving the lives of others. We’re moving into an era where physicians can see patients remotely and accurately diagnose a patient’s problems, even in the most rural areas, through telemedicine. We have moved from using technology to reduce errors and improve patient care to transforming the entire health care industry.

Our experts in informatics, emerging technologies, and data analytics collaborate across business and clinical departments using evidence-based approaches to define the clinical value of patient- and enterprise-facing health IT. We assess your current systems, documentation, and information-sharing requirements, then use advanced data analytics to identify improvements across the care delivery system. Lastly, we help migrate existing processes and infrastructure to the desired future state.

Like a Chief Medical Information Officer, we can maximize the value of your health IT investment by working across IT systems. We are experts at integrating and analyzing large, complex data sets, including clinical, quality, public health, and claims data. We can help you go beyond using health IT as a transactional tool to deploy it as a strategic instrument to help transform the way medical care can and should be delivered.

Areas of Expertise

- **CLINICAL INFORMATICS**
- **TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT**
- **DIGITAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS FOR PATIENT ENGAGEMENT AND CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT**
- **TELEMEDICINE ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**
- **HEALTH IT WORK FLOW AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT**
- **CLINICAL DECISION SUPPORT APPLICATIONS**
The impact of health IT on workflow

Anytime you make a change to your practice, especially when implementing health IT, the workflow associated with clinical and practice management processes changes. Health IT and the work systems it supports are not always compatible and can result in potential patient safety issues, increased provider burden, and failure to achieve the intended benefits. Studying the impact of health IT on changes to workflow is complex. There are many contributing factors, including people, processes, and technology. RTI uses a sociotechnical framework to help organizations understand the potential impact a health IT intervention might have on workflow.

RTI explored health IT-workflow alignment around care coordination activities in six ambulatory primary care clinics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center that were implementing a new care coordination program involving their electronic health record (EHR), patient portal, and several communication technologies to improve diabetes care.

RTI experts conducted a rigorous qualitative study of this health IT-enabled redesign of a care coordination program across five different primary and two supporting areas of work. A technology matrix was developed for each work area that readily categorized the quality of interaction between the health IT intervention and the care coordination as good, neutral, or poor. Stakeholders were engaged to identify ways to improve workflow in areas that were ranked neutral or poor. This approach ensured that areas of improvement were addressed before full implementation of the intervention.

Our approach takes into account the nuances of each context in which the IT intervention is deployed to maximize improvements to care coordination and delivery, ensuring a smoother rollout and greater adoption by stakeholders.