



HEALTH INFORMATION SECURITY & PRIVACY TOOLKIT

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States launch virtual toolkit for health care providers, encourage electronic health information exchange

From hospital corridors across the country to full page advertisements in *USA Today*, it appears that just about everyone is calling for the healthcare industry to go electronic. While most industries have long ago updated, the medical community – entrusted with the lives of millions of patients annually – is slower to adapt.

Numerous efforts are underway to improve a system far too reliant on paper records. One such initiative aims to provide information about privacy and security to health care providers in order to encourage their participation in electronic health information exchange

The Health Information Security & Privacy Collaboration Provider Education Toolkit (HISPC-PET), a national initiative launched January 2009 in eight pilot states, focuses on safe, private and secure health information exchange technology for health care providers. Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and Wyoming are part of the effort.

The Web-based toolkit, found at www.Secure4Health.org, offers physician-to-physician advice, resource links and national subject-matter expert answers to frequently asked questions. Health care providers can take advantage of free continuing medical education credits while learning more about electronic health information exchange technology and electronic health record systems.

David C. Kibbe, MD, is one of the two national physician champions for the initiative. He serves as senior advisor for the American Academy of Family Physicians' Center for Health Information Technology.

“As a long-time advocate, I know health information technology has the potential to offer real-time information at the point of care and greater privacy and security protections,” said Dr. Kibbe. “After years of commitment to health information technology, I firmly believe that it offers physicians the opportunity to make better clinical decisions, avoid duplication and medical errors, and aid in the prevention of certain diseases and conditions.”

Kentucky Lt. Governor Daniel Mongiardo is a practicing surgeon and a strong proponent of secure health information exchange and electronic health record systems. He also serves as a physician champion for the project. He joins Dr. Kibbe in encouraging health care providers, especially those in rural areas, to engage in electronic health information exchange.

“Not only is the information private and secure, but it will also help improve the delivery of healthcare services,” said Dr. Mongiardo. “By making health information available to doctors electronically, anywhere, medical errors and costs can be reduced. It is one way to help improve the U.S. healthcare system.”

The goals of the Provider Education Toolkit include:

- Introducing physicians to the benefits of electronic health information exchange;

- Increasing provider's awareness of the privacy and security benefits and challenges of electronic health information exchange;
- Motivating providers to learn more about the advantages of participating in electronic health information exchange; and
- Encouraging the adoption of electronic health record technology so that providers can connect to a regional health information exchange.

The initiative consists of a pilot project that runs from January to March 2009. To evaluate its impact on physicians and the medical community, the HISPC will analyze Web site traffic, the number of health care providers taking advantage of free continuing medical education credits and other evaluation metrics. The goal is to use this feedback to design an education and outreach toolkit for providers nationwide.

The Provider Education Toolkit is the result of work completed by HISPC, a multi-year project launched in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The collaboration comprises 42 states and territories and addresses the privacy and security challenges presented by electronic health information exchange through multi-state collaboration.

For more information, visit www.Secure4Health.org.