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Building a roadmap to a successful HIE

Health care organizations are undergoing substantial changes in response to marketplace initiatives and regulatory reforms that range from new payment models and care quality measures, to complying with Meaningful Use requirements. Central to succeeding in this new business environment is health information exchange (HIEs) technology. With the proper HIE, health care data can be securely shared between organizations to meet the objectives of industry initiatives and reforms, such as managing new populations, coordinating care, measuring performance, and reporting care quality.

Creating a successful HIE — or connecting to other HIEs — entails much more than simply selecting the right technology. There are significant governance and process issues to consider. Plus, even reaching a consensus on the goals of an HIE can be a tremendous challenge without the proper guidance.

To help organizations with the HIE decisions that confront them, this white paper evaluates the steps in building a roadmap for a successful HIE, from the initial readiness assessments, to initiating the transformation.

HIE readiness assessment benefits:

- Gain a big-picture perspective
- Identify your benchmarks, gaps and opportunities
- Document and align organizational goals

Delivering on the promise of connected care

The initial stages of creating an HIE roadmap requires organizations to align stakeholders, define goals, and focus on the components that will drive HIE success. Key areas to address include:

- **Interoperability —** A commitment to the creation of a medical trading area in which diverse systems work together

- **Meaningful use —** The inclusion of stakeholders who will contribute to and meaningfully utilize longitudinal patient data to improve health care quality and reduce costs

- **Medical community —** One with no data gaps and the ability to measure, manage and report institutional quality, cost and performance

- **Decision support —** The ability to deliver the right information to the right team member at the right time in the right format

- **Public health —** The ability to connect with state information technology (IT) systems, manage new populations and payers

Where to begin?

A successful HIE implementation will create longitudinal patient data that can be tracked, shared and analyzed by health care providers. Additionally, HIEs provide the framework for organizations to transition from fee-for-service payment models and into the new era of accountable care organizations (ACOs). With so much at stake, it's often difficult for organizations to know where to begin their efforts.

Before diving into HIE deployment, organizations need to assess their level of readiness. Conducting an HIE readiness assessment enables organizations to prepare stakeholders for buy-in, and analyzes an organization's risks and operational readiness through a current state examination of exposure points, strategy, people, process and technology.

Findings from the HIE readiness assessment should be documented to serve as a roadmap for plans going forward. The resulting documentation helps organizations plainly articulate their goals to ensure all stakeholders have their "GPS" set on the same destination during the HIE implementation and beyond. Areas to evaluate during the assessment include:

- **Strategy —** Interview key executives to gain insights into their HIE vision, goals and objectives.

- **Governance/People —** Analyze the organization's current structure to see how and where new staff can be incorporated – if needed – and where existing staff can be leveraged to manage and administer the HIE. Identify medical trading partners and what they need to ensure effective HIE utilization. Engage all stakeholders in the assessments, including administrative, technical, clinical leaders and health care providers.

- **Technology —** Assess if the organization's existing technology can support the HIE initiative, and what is needed to set the stage for population health management, by evaluating:

  - Electronic health records

  - Clinical diagnostic information exchange

  - Connections to payers

  - Data warehousing, mining and analytics

  - Quality and performance analysis

- **Process —** Evaluate how to successfully execute new processes with minimal change to existing operations, focusing on workflow analysis that leads toward process improvements.

Findings from the readiness assessment will enable organizations to better define their HIE goals, which should be expressed in an actionable plan that articulates the following:

- Governance structure

- Clinical and business processes

- Collaborative payer and provider systems

- Strategies to support clinical adoption, staffing and budgeting, and communication

- Training, testing and HIE implementation processes

- Risk mitigation

Create a successful HIE strategy to address core issues

Improve your system

- Reduce costs

- Speed information delivery

- Improve employee productivity

- Respond to public health crises

- Strengthen alliances

Meaningful use of technology

- Eliminate information gaps that could disrupt meaningful use of data, such as eligibility, drug interactions, duplicative tests or unnecessary care

Prepare for emerging markets due to reform

- Anticipate challenges with state IT systems

- Confirm ability to recognize Medicare/Medicaid eligibility

Better engage new populations

- Spot high-risk patients

- Improve care coordination

- Respond to more claims

Get ready for ACO formation

- Refine ability to measure, manage, and report institutional quality, cost and performance

Key data questions to answer

- How much data is available now?

- What are the data diversity barriers of interoperability? Examples include single data types, low levels of data, cost of integration, etc.

- How long will it take to reach data diversity and data saturation to support utilization and to generate consistent clinical and financial value?
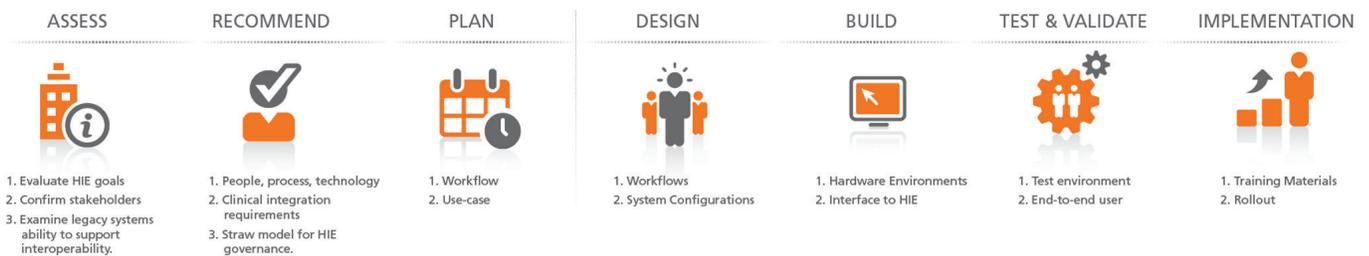
Initiating the HIE transformation

The journey to creating a well-connected medical community entails leveraging the findings from the readiness assessment to create a transition plan that:

- Illustrates how organizations can move their medical trading area from a current state into full HIE utilization that generates consistent clinical and financial value

- Accounts for existing technology and stakeholder needs to manage costs, gain buy-in and build confidence in the HIE

- Provides an agnostic technology approach to align client needs with effective and efficient technology

Timelines

Numerous variables exist within every health care organization that can potentially impact the time needed to conduct a thorough HIE readiness assessment. Generally, completing a readiness assessment can take 8 to 12 weeks. The graphic below represents an overview of the milestones within the readiness assessment and implementation processes.

ASSESS	RECOMMEND	PLAN	DESIGN	BUILD	TEST & VALIDATE	IMPLEMENTATION
1. Evaluate HIE goals 2. Confirm stakeholders 3. Examine legacy systems ability to support interoperability.	1. People, process, technology 2. Clinical integration requirements 3. Straw model for HIE governance.	1. Workflow 2. Use-case	1. Workflows 2. System Configurations	1. Hardware Environments 2. Interface to HIE	1. Test environment 2. End-to-end user	1. Training Materials 2. Rollout

How Optum can help

Utilizing an experienced third party to conduct an HIE readiness assessment provides an objective perspective, while also reducing the time and resources that an organization has to dedicate to the effort. The Optum Readiness Assessment serves as a comprehensive roadmap prior to HIE implementation and prepares stakeholders for buy-in. Created in partnership with an organization's leadership team and Optum's multidisciplinary experts, the assessment analyzes an organization's risks and operational readiness through a current state examination of exposure points, strategy, people, process and technology. The assessment enables organizations to:

- Identify how to maximize existing health IT systems and close functionality gaps

- Connect with administrative, technological and clinical leaders within the community to identify capabilities and barriers

- Define goals and long-term success strategies — including how to address emerging trends

Complete HIE services from Optum

- **Operational Readiness and Change Management —** Optum consultants will provide assistance in planning, preparing the organization, and executing the rollout of new or upgraded HIE solutions throughout the enterprise in a production environment

- **Project Management —** Optum provides experienced project management consultants with knowledge and expertise in health care delivery systems (payer and provider) who have implemented HIEs across the country

- **Optum Technologies —** Optum offers a range of technologies for data aggregation, reporting and analytics to support decision-making in health care

- **Software Build and Configuration —** Optum's clinical and business consultants have experience in the build and configuration of HIE solutions

- **Software Implementation, Testing and Training —** Optum HIE technical consultants can support clients with the installation of the HIE software on hardware platforms, the implementation and setup of software in operational environments, and the necessary testing and validation of the HIE systems

Start mapping you path to HIE success

The changing health care marketplace is dictating the need for increased information exchanges, and HIEs are becoming a pivotal component to achieve current regulatory requirements and future industry initiatives. The organizations that invest their efforts into conducting and HIE readiness assessment — essentially laying the groundwork before they take action or build — are the ones that are most likely to realize the highest level of benefits.

About Optum

Optum is an information and technology-enabled health services company serving the broad health care marketplace, including providers, health plans, life sciences companies and consumers and employs more than 30,000 people worldwide. For more information about Optum and its product and services, please visit **www.optum.com**.

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