

e-Health Council

October 2, 2008, 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Executive Building, Lower Level Conference Room
Lincoln, Nebraska
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Berens, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Rural Health
Vivianne Chaumont, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Medicaid and Long Term Care
Kimberly Galt (via phone), Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Health Professions
Donna Hammack, Nebraska Statewide Telehealth Network and St. Elizabeth Foundation
Steve Henderson, Office of the CIO
Wende Baker (alternate for C.J. Johnson), Executive Director, Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network
Harold Krueger, Western Nebraska Health Information Exchange and Chadron Community Hospital
Ken Lawonn, NeHII and Alegent Health
David Lawton, Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Assurance
Dr. Keith Mueller, UNMC College of Public Health
Nancy Shank, Public Policy Center
September Stone, Nebraska Health Care Association
Dr. Harris A. Frankel (alternate for Dr. Delane Wycoff)
Marsha Morien (via phone) (alternate for Henry Zach)
Dr. Delane Wycoff, Pathology Services, PC

Members Absent:

Susan Courtney, Blue Cross/Blue Shield; Joni Cover, Nebraska Pharmacists Association; Senator Annette Dubas, Nebraska Legislature; Congressman Jeff Fortenberry; Dan Griess, Box Butte General Hospital-Alliance; Alice Henneman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County; Ron Hoffman, Jr., Mutual of Omaha; Jim Krieger, Gallup; Jeff Kuhr, Three Rivers Public Health Department-Fremont; Kay Oestmann, Southeast District Health Department; John Roberts, Nebraska Rural Health Association

Roll Call, Notice of Posting of Agenda, Notice of Nebraska Open Meetings Act

Dr. Keith Mueller called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. There were 14 members present, two of which were via a conference call. Due to the fact that only 12 members were present in Lincoln, there was no quorum. It was noted that the meeting announcement was posted on the NITC website and on the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar on September 19, 2008. The agenda was posted on September 24, 2008. A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available on the table.

Due to lack of quorum, approval of the [August 13, 2008 meeting minutes](#) was tabled until the next meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discussion with Lt. Governor Sheehy

Lt. Governor Sheehy updated members on the NGA State Alliance for eHealth State Learning Forum in Washington, DC. He attended the conference with Dr. Keith Mueller who also contributed to the update.

Specific points of interest and/or topics included the following:

- Some states are further ahead of Nebraska, and others are still behind us.
- The State of Nebraska needs to determine whether we want to legislate or regulate the exchange of health information.
- e-Prescribing has been identified by the State Alliance as a priority area. Although e-prescribing is often described as “low-hanging fruit,” there are significant challenges—particularly in rural areas.

- There is less investment available for transformation now than there was 6 month ago.
- There is no cookie cutter model for financing the initial start-up and operational costs of e-Health efforts.
- The patients and primary care givers need to be involved with e-Health initiatives.

Council members discussed the benefits of e-prescribing which included cost savings due to increased use of generic drugs, the ability to audit prescription refills, improved work flow for providers, and improved patient compliance. Harold Krueger commented that telepharmacy also needs to be examined as a way to enable pharmacies in rural areas to continue to operate.

Council members discussed the barriers of e-prescribing which included:

- ◆ Persuading physicians who still like to write paper prescriptions;
- ◆ Implementation and maintenance costs for physicians;
- ◆ Connectivity issues;
- ◆ Availability of pharmacists for rural hospitals;
- ◆ Costs for pharmacies.

Lt. Governor Sheehy thanked everyone for their participation on this council.

Financing Health IT

Dr. Frankel commented that we have to look at both start-up and operation costs for e-Health initiatives in several phases. Start-up costs are often from a combination of private and public sector sources. User fees can be used to finance operation costs. Patients stand to gain the most. There is an intangible value to having this technology in healthcare and there are many opportunities to benefit from it.

Vivianne Chaumont left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

[WNHIE – Western Nebraska Health Information Exchange](#)

Nancy Shank, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center

She stated that WNHIE members include 9 hospitals in western Nebraska, Panhandle Community Services Health Clinic, Panhandle Mental Health Center, and the Panhandle Public Health District in western Nebraska. Financing in rural Nebraska can be more challenging than in metropolitan areas. WNHIE comprises two, equally important components – applications (advanced medical technologies and services) and infrastructure (robust fiber optic connectivity). For further detailed information, please click on the above link.

Mr. Krueger commented that, until we have the infrastructure in place, health information exchange won't benefit the facilities in rural western Nebraska.

SNBHIN Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network

Wende Baker, Executive Director, Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network

Ms. Baker stated that infrastructure in rural Nebraska is important. SNBHIN has received two grants from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. She anticipates that the project will take 3-4 years to implement.

[SENHIE Southeast Nebraska Health Information Exchange](#)

Joyce Beck, Thayer County Health Services

Ms. Beck reported that Thayer County Health Services has set aside monies for electronic medical records. The project determined that electronic records were vital to the clinic. The project has given presentations to various groups and organizations and has raised \$2.2 million dollars. Physicians contributed in order to implement health information exchange in their clinics. Ms. Beck acknowledged Donna Hammack for her assistance with the telehealth network.

No report was available regarding Medicaid or Blue Cross Blue Shield.

State Employee Benefits Program

Roger Wilson, Controller, Department of Administrative Services

The State Employee Benefits Program's annual budget is approximately \$180 million dollars. The state continually explores ways to reduce expenses. Electronic health records are one way of saving costs. Providers need to understand the Value of Investment (VOI) vs. the Rate of Investment (ROI). The focus should be placed on the long term benefits of e-Health. The Lt. Governor is correct in saying the state's budget is very tight right now. Getting grants is one thing, but sustaining them is another. Mr. Wilson strongly recommended that e-Health initiatives be managed by a non-profit organization.

Other States

David Lawton, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Services

Mr. Lawton distributed the e-Health initiative results from the [2008 survey on Health Information Exchange](#). Highlights he presented from the report include:

- A majority of the fully operational exchange efforts (29/42) report reductions in health care costs.
- About half of fully operational exchange efforts (22/42) report positive impacts on health care delivery.
- For the first time, a majority (69%) of operational exchange efforts (29/42) report a positive financial return on their investment (ROI) for their participating stakeholders.
- Operational health information exchange initiatives are no longer dependent on federal funds.

For more survey information please click on the above link.

Public Policy Center Proposal Update

Tarik Abdel-Monem and Alan Tompkins, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center

The overall goal of the proposed project is to obtain perspectives of Nebraskans about electronic sharing of health information and, in particular, perspectives about legal and policy issues currently under consideration by the NITC, HISPC, e-Health Council, and other state policymakers and advisory groups. The funds provided by the grant will support our activities to document Nebraskans' knowledge of and attitudes towards these issues by preparing for and convening two surveys and a Deliberative Poll. The project will be working with all stakeholders involved to formulate survey questions. Council members are welcome to help formulate survey questions.

UPDATE-[HISPC](#)

Due to time constraints the HISPC update was moved up on the agenda.

Sheila Wrobel gave a PowerPoint presentation on the recommendations of the Health Information Security and Privacy Committee's Legal Work Group. Members include Dennis Berens, DHHS; David Lawton, DHHS; Roger Brink, DHHS; Joe Acierno, DHHS; Sheila Wrobel, UNMC; Charlene Dunbar, Nebraska Heart Institute; Kim Hazelton, Bryan-LGH; Kim Galt, Creighton University; and Ron Hoffman, Mutual of Omaha.

Recommendations include:

- Propose amendment to Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-8403:
 - Authorizations for release of medical records are valid for a maximum period of 180 days. The work group recommends eliminating the 180 day restriction. HIPAA requirements would then apply. HIPAA allows patients to state an expiration date or expiration event.
- Create a model authorization form and obtain review from DHHS and the Nebraska Bar Association
 - Availability of model form would reduce covered entities' workloads created when authorizations that do not meet HIPAA requirements must be returned for correction.
- Provide education to health care entities in areas where confusion may exist about disclosure laws
 - If entities are not sure whether a disclosure is permissible, they are less likely to disclose PHI.

For more detailed information please click on the HISPC link provided above.

Membership

The nomination of Wende Baker, Executive Director of the Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network, could not be voted on due to lack of members present.

PHR (Personal Health Record Group) and e-Prescribing

Council members reviewed the charge of the work group:

- Gain a greater understanding of the different types of PHRs available, and make recommendations on engaging consumers and providers in the use of PHRs to manage health care.
- Help understand the interface between PHRs and EMRs and make recommendations on how to encourage providers of health information to populate PHRs with health information.
- Make recommendations on engaging employers and payers in the adoption of PHRs.
- Identify and disseminate best practices.

Council members recommended changing the wording on the third bullet so that the charge does not assume that employers and payers should promote PHRs. The statement will be reworded as follows:

- ◆ Examine the value of PHRs to employers and payers and make recommendations on the role of employers and payers in promoting PHRs.

The first meeting of the PHR Work Group is scheduled for October 24, 2008, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Durham Research Center Tower I in Room 4003, UNMC.

e-Prescribing Work Group

Ms. Byers asked members to review the charge to the e-Prescribing Work Group.

Charge:

- Determining the current status of e-Prescribing, from both the prescriber and dispensing pharmacy point of view.
- Identifying barriers to e-Prescribing.
- Making recommendations to promote the adoption of e-Prescribing by all parties involved in the e-Prescribing process.
- Identifying and disseminating best practices.

Kim Galt suggested adding the following item to the charge:

- ◆ Study the start up and sustainability costs (e.g., hardware, software, and training costs), and potential sources of resources to support the essential needs of pharmacies in the state of Nebraska to participate and support e-prescribing.

Anne Byers asked Harold Krueger to participate in the group. Ken Lawonn offered to identify a NeHII board member to participate.

The first meeting of the e-Prescribing Work Group is scheduled for October 20, 2008, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Lincoln.

UPDATES

NEHII—Mr. Lawonn informed the council that it is anticipated that the NEHII Electronic Health Exchange Project will go live in Omaha in approximately 60-90 days.

SENHIE—Joyce Beck stated that Thayer County Hospital has accomplished their project goals and their vision is now a reality! EMTs, the hospital, and health clinics are paperless and are completely electronic. Physicians can access any or all information on their laptops at the hospital or from home. She said they are now connected with St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Lincoln. St. E's computer system currently has an icon that connects to Thayer County Hospital so they can access all of the patients' records. The Thayer County Hospital tested their e-prescribing function. It was discovered a new larger capacity server would be needed. Ms. Beck stated that everything needs to be done by the end of December 2008, and then the quality indicators will go up.

Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting date will be held in early December; date TBA. We plan to use video conferencing at this meeting.

With no further business, Dr. Mueller adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m..

Meeting minutes were taken by Candace Cruickshank and reviewed by Anne Byers.