

Health Information Compliance Alert

HIT: New York Leads the Way in Health IT Initiatives

Grants, private initiatives could pave the trail for other states, the feds.

While arguments against healthcare reform are perennial, New York is making inroads. And it's not just healthcare industry players who are showing their support --stakeholders in the private sector and the general public are giving kudos as well.

Here's how New York's statewide health information technology strategy is proving successful.

Grants a Key Booster

The development of electronic health information exchange (HIE) in New York has been promising, thanks to funding from the Healthcare Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers, also known as HEAL NY. The grants allow the state to allocate \$250 million to health IT, which is the largest state-based public investment of its kind, according to a report from the Commonwealth Fund. And that's on top of the \$19 billion that will come from the stimulus package that will be available next year.

Funding: Nearly \$160 million in HEAL NY funds have been granted; plus, the private sector has earmarked \$230 million for health IT infrastructure in New York, according to a study by Weill Cornell Medical College. And the success rate of grantees' project implementation is remarkable compared to other states. The health IT systems of the first batch of grantees from the first two phases in 2006 and 2008 are still up and running, Cornell reported.

Meanwhile, the Primary Care Information Project is covering health IT ground in New York State too; the organization will help create of a system of regional health IT extension centers, according to www.nyc.gov.PCIP, a program started in 2007, supports electronic health record usage among primary care providers in New York's underserved communities, according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Web site. Its mission is to improve the population's health through appropriate technology and health information exchange.

E-Prescribing Still Cooking

The Statewide Health Information Network for New York (SHIN-NY) is making headway also with prescription history data exchange. The New York eHealth Collaborative is partnering with InterComponentWare and Surescripts to develop an eHealth prototype that facilitates prescription routing and, with a patient's consent, delivers prescription history for NY residents through SHIN-NY, according to a press release.

SHIN-NY believes the prototype will create a seamless transmission of prescriptions and prescription history between electronic medical records and a huge network of stakeholders -- from pharmacies to patients. The prototype is set for implementation later this year.