



Interim CIOs - The Important Role They Play



For a Chief Information Officer serving in an interim capacity, one major task he/she needs to focus on is assisting with the successful CIO search. There are also a number of things the interim CIO can do to help address a range of issues that currently challenge healthcare CIOs. These challenges include:

- How to improve patient engagement given the move to accountable care models;
- How to provide growth opportunities for IT teams and;
- How to find time and resources to drive innovation.

See Also: [Finding Skilled IT Professionals a Challenge, CIOs Say](#)

"I have been a CIO in a few different healthcare organisations recently, so I could describe multiple experiences with these challenges. While we have similar internal drivers, and face similar external constraints, no two organisations are the same," said Sue Schade, currently interim CIO at Stony Brook Medicine in Stony Brook, New York.

There are opportunities for improvement in any organisation, and the interim CIO needs to work closely with the management team to identify those opportunities while ensuring they "don't fix things that aren't broken," Sue pointed out.

Sue provides a list of items the interim CIOs can do to help with the day-to-day operational issues of IT:

Improve core vendor relationship. This can be done even in a short timeframe.

Ensure IT support for acquisitions and clinical affiliations. In a growing healthcare network, IT is a core component supporting all these relationships.

Assess staffing and organisation structure. It is not unusual for an interim leader to look critically at this, make minor changes, and recommend more significant changes for the permanent CIO to consider.

Fully implement IT Governance that started several months ago. Most organisations have an opportunity here. With a good framework to build on, it's a matter of executing and getting everyone on the same page.

Ensure tight project management and improve business alignment. Except for infrastructure work, projects need to be true partnerships between IT and the user community. Projects need clear executive sponsors and business owners to be successful.

Work with the University CIO. Make sure that recent changes in IT support for the needs of the health sciences schools do not have gaps in service.

Source: [Healthcare IT News](#)

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