Making a Success of Health Data Exchange

Recently, the Alaska Journal of Commerce reported the success of a data exchange platform being used at emergency departments in several Alaskan hospitals. The Collective Medical platform allows for easier health data exchange between hospitals and means that emergency department staff have immediate access to a patient's medical history. The system works by connecting to electronic health records (EHRs).

You might also like: Survey Finds Privacy and Security Key Barriers to Interoperability

Keri Gardner, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Alaska Regional Hospital, explained how previously her hospital had a book with all the patients' care plans. Under the new system, this information is now accessible in multiple hospitals.

The Collective Medical data exchange platform is now being used at a dozen hospitals in Alaska. It uses the HL7 standard as a way to enhance interoperability between hospitals.

The platform is also able to record incidents of safety threats. Rachel Lieber, Collective Medical's northwest region manager, explains that this was a feature established early in the development of the programme. Emergency department staff are amongst those with the highest risk of injury or threatening behaviour. Lieber emphasised the importance of knowing how staff are coping daily and this feature can highlight any recurring issues.

Collective Medical began its collaboration with Alaskan state health providers at a similar time to the ASHNHA (Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association) care coordination initiative. ASHNHA CEO, Becky Hultberg says that the care coordination the programme offers is a fundamental reason for adopting the new system.

Many hospitals in the network have seen a 10% reduction in those that frequent the emergency department and a 15% decrease in emergency department utilisation. As well as benefitting the patient, Hultberg explains that the Collective platform also has the potential to reduce unnecessary admissions and readmissions.

Source: HIT Infrastructure
Image Credit: iStock

Published on : Thu, 5 Sep 2019