

# Health Information Technology

Insight, Research, and Consultation for Improved Patient Care and Outcomes



As public and private sectors hasten to adopt and use health information technology (health IT), Abt Associates is supporting their efforts through strategic policy and planning assistance, system design, development and support, and program and services management and evaluation. As we work to increase electronic health information's accessibility, organization and usability, we remain committed to our goal—**improving case management, quality of care and patient and population outcomes.**

## **Abt Associates' Work in Health Information Technology**

### **Supporting Federal Health IT Policy**

Abt supported the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology Leadership, estimating the resources required to meet the 2014 goal of an electronic health record for every American, and identifying lessons learned in the U.S. and internationally about health IT implementation.

### **Demonstrating the Value of Secure Messaging Between Patients and Clinicians**

Under contract with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT), Abt implemented a pilot demonstration in two integrated health systems to test whether Medicare reimbursement for e-visits would encourage the appropriate use of secure messaging.

### **Evaluating Health Information Exchange and Beacon Initiatives**

We are assisting the Geisinger Health System with evaluation design, primary data collection, and secondary data analysis to measure the impact of two linked health IT initiatives: the Keystone Health Information Exchange expansion funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Keystone Beacon Community funded by ONCHIT.



### **Health IT Hazard Manager**

Because Health IT systems alter information flows among clinical teams, they may also introduce new risks or safety hazards. With AHRQ funding, Abt and partners at Geisinger Clinics and the ECRI Patient Safety Organization developed and tested a tool to consistently capture information about health IT hazards at the vendor-product level, and manage these hazards to resolution.

### **Improving EHR Patient Education Materials**

Partnering with the Mongan Institute for Health Policy at Massachusetts General Hospital and Northwestern University's Health Literacy and Learning Program, Abt led a project that assessed whether patient education materials delivered by electronic health records (EHR) are both understandable and actionable. Results will be used to educate EHR vendors and users about the need for, and availability of such materials.

### **Developing Standards for Electronic Behavioral Health Records**

Under contract with the Center for Mental Health Services, a part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Abt established and worked with an expert panel to develop a national conformance profile for an Electronic Behavioral Health Record (EBHR). In addition, we adapted the DS2000+ system to create an online collaboration and balloting system, enabling panelists to view, comment, and vote on hundreds of workgroup documents and profile items. Abt's team members also surveyed software vendors to identify conformance requirements and developed a business plan for promoting the standards.

## Measuring Progress on Health Information Technology

In partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard School of Public Health, Abt established benchmark measures of health IT implementation in various settings. Funded by AHRQ, the project team gathered data to create new metrics on: the reduction of medication errors through computerized provider order entry; the number of patients who can electronically access medication information; the number of clinicians who electronically access evidence-based information; and the number of organizations that adopt clinical decision support technology.

## Using Electronic Health Records to Generate Quality Metrics

Abt and its partners are assisting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in the implementation of the HITECH Act, through electronic specification of inpatient hospital quality measures. Hospitals will receive incentive payments for using these quality measures to report on their meaningful use of EHRs. Abt clinicians and researchers, along with health informatics staff at our partner organizations, employ state-of-the-art programming languages, standardized nomenclature like ICD-10, and technologies to develop and validate the quality eMeasures.

## Telehealth Performance Monitoring

Abt conducted the first national survey regarding rural telemedicine activities, and then was funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to create a performance monitoring system for telehealth grantees. The system measured the value added to rural and underserved communities by telehealth programs. The Web-based reporting system has been operated by Abt and HRSA since 2003.

## Contact

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**Abt Associates** is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.

