

Rhode Island Quality Institute Establishes Scalable, Repeatable Technology for EHRs to Connect to State HIEs via Direct

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PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND-The Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality, safety and value of healthcare in Rhode Island, announced today that it successfully implemented a real-time connection between Cumberland Primary Care's Electronic Healthcare Record (EHR), EpiChart, to Rhode Island's Statewide HIE (currentcare) using national technology standards for Direct Messaging and the Continuity of Care Document (CCDs).

When triggered by a clinical transaction, EpiChart automatically creates a CCD and sends it to currentcare via a Direct message. The clinical data in the CCD is then added to the consented patient's currentcare account, making that data available to all members of the patient's care team.

A member of RIQI's Regional Extension Center, Cumberland Primary Care is the first practice in the nation to implement this Direct-based interoperability architecture - a platform-agnostic architecture that does not affect provider clinical workflow and that minimizes the work required by EHR vendors to implement the technology. The Cumberland Primary Care project is one of seven pilot projects recognized by the ONC to demonstrate the use of Direct; RIQI is the only which targets EHR-HIE interoperability.

"We are proud to have this type of functionality embraced as a phenomenal way to communicate seamlessly with currentcare--the provider doesn't need to do anything new to deliver a constant flow of clinical data to the state's health information exchange," stated Noah Benedict, Chief Operating Officer at Polaris Medical Management, the developers of the EpiChart EHR. "This moves us all one step closer towards our ultimate goal of improving public health. RIQI is building an innovative, more cost effective, and efficient way to connect by working with each EHR platform instead of creating custom connections for each individual practice."

"This is great for our patients and will help us continue to improve upon the quality of care we pride ourselves on giving them," commented Dr. Avnish Mehta of Cumberland Primary Care. "The ability of having this connection will enable us to make sure our patients' data is simply and securely put into currentcare."

Other EHR vendors are currently working with RIQI to lever this simple approach to interoperability. That key vendors are participating and that practices need nothing more than a Direct account to automatically share data will help drive statewide adoption of this EHR-to-HIE interoperability model.

The Direct Project, sponsored by The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), specifies a simple, secure, scalable, standards-based way for participants to send authenticated, encrypted health information directly to known, trusted recipients over the Internet. It seeks to benefit patients and providers by improving the transport of health information, making it faster, more secure, and less expensive.

Designed to be a scalable and affordable solution for practices of all sizes, Direct Messaging replaces less secure communication methods, such as faxes, promotes a simple means of exchange between primary care physicians (PCPs) and specialists, and can facilitate the adoption of Stage 1 Meaningful Use around the electronic exchange of clinical information.

"We are excited to be the first to initiate this innovative use of Direct to transport protected health information to an HIE and do so in a way that complements the larger national interoperability framework," commented Gary Christensen, COO and CIO at RIQI.

In addition to Polaris and Cumberland Primary Care, key partners in the implementation of this project include InterSystems, the developer of HealthShare, the core infrastructure of RIQI's HIE, currentcare; Inpriva, a Health Information Service Provider (HISP) which provides secure Direct Messaging connectivity; and Arcadia Solutions, a healthcare consultancy providing program management and solution architecture services.

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About the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI)

Founded in 2001, the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) is a collaboration of leaders in the Rhode Island community who share the intent to substantively improve the healthcare system in the state. The collaboration includes CEOs of hospitals, health insurers, and businesses, along with leaders of consumer groups, academia, and government. RIQI's mission is to significantly improve the quality, safety, and value of health care in Rhode Island. RIQI is the Governor-designated sole Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) for Rhode Island, chosen to coordinate the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE). As the RHIO, RIQI is charged with bringing together health care stakeholders within the state and governing HIE among them for the purpose of improving health outcomes in the community. For more information, visit www.RIQI.org.

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