Quality Strategy to Follow up Meaningful Use (MU) of Electronic Health Record Implementations

Patricia Levi  MS, MPH, RN
University of Colorado Denver College of Nursing

Introduction

Several Mandates from “The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (ACA), the health reform law, in addition to requirements of “Meaningful Use” demand new intensive reporting, and have created an accountability agenda in the healthcare industry for the next years. IT strategists recognize that achieving Meaningful Use is not an IT project. It is a care transformation initiative that will affect almost every aspect of operations; a cultural change to align physicians with quality goals (Metzger, 2011).

Strong governance and training are essential to making sure everyone understands the importance of the enterprise (Marhefka & Newcomb, 2012). Workflow and clinical content must be aligned to facilitate a right and seamless data flow to the EHR, and allow data to be used in performance analytics for tracking and managing required improvements and efficiencies (Morrison, 2010).

This case study sought to identify best practices for Electronic Health Record (EHR) implementations in medical practices and a strategy to promote and end user readiness for MU quality processes and reporting compliance. As a nurse informatics student in an implementation role, I served as liaison between users and IT experts, for the coordination of projects, effective use of applications, process improvement, and the integration of EHR technology in accordance with users viewpoint and MU objectives and measures (ANA, 2008).

Purpose & Objectives

Purpose

Develop a roadmap to facilitate end user readiness for MU quality processes and reporting.

Objectives

1. Define a MU knowledge base
2. Assess and user performance on MU objectives and quality measures to identify possible gaps
3. Identify workflow impacts on end users related with value/utilization, point of care documentation, clinical processes and consumer education/information
4. Define best training practices for MU
5. Propose options for continuous end user evaluation related to MU progress

Results

MU Knowledge Base

Integrated and focused dynamic set of information about:
1. The HITECH Act and CMS rules
2. Vendor specifications
3. Business rules

Present main technical and operational aspects:
1) Definitions
2) Requirements
3) Links to legislation and websites of interest

Obtained through systematic collection of information from primary stakeholder sources. Validated through expert opinion. As Meaningful use stages advance, this knowledge base can also grow with research and institutional policy.

MU Individual & Group Progress Evaluation Tool

This tool is designed to:
1. Review MU criteria
2. Measure performance and
3. Risk status of individual providers

Is useful to:
1. Integrate notes and metrics
2. Summarize status
3. Prioritize issues
4. Organize accountabilities
5. Manage action items
6. Orient best practices

Based in literature review. Validated by expert opinion. Allows participation and transparency between process owners, system analysts, and end users to identify gaps and bring them to the right group for solution.

Discussion & Projections

Much effort implementing information systems today is focused on technical challenges associated with functionality issues, system specifications, and requirements needed to qualify for funding under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) (De Vore & Figlioli, 2010). These are important aspects; however they do not address the “gray areas” that will ultimately have a bigger impact on the success or failure of the MU project and vision.

Stage I main actors are providers; stage 2 consumers; stage 3 populations, organizations and ultimately society, who will operationalize data. It is necessary to develop best practice strategies oriented to and end users to achieve clinical performance improvement and business value (Boberg, 2012).

Conclusions

Reaching Meaningful Use is an organization-wide initiative. It is necessary to review and understand MU requirements as they apply to the organization, providers and consumers. Success will be attained with attention to user particular workflows, understanding of criteria, critical evaluation and the involvement of stakeholders and system users. Meaningful use is more than an IT Project.

References


