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Wisconsin HEALTH INFORMATION Organization

Wisconsin Health Information Organization Partners with Ingenix to Launch Groundbreaking, Statewide Data Mart to Improve the Transparency, Quality, and Efficiency of Health Care

Highlights

- The Wisconsin Health Information Organization (WHIO) is an innovative collaboration between health care providers, insurance companies, employers, and public agencies that share a commitment to improving health care.

- WHIO contracted with Ingenix to help create the WHIO Health Analytics Exchange, a data mart of health claims data and a sophisticated analytical tool that report on the quality and efficiency of care delivered in Wisconsin.

- The Exchange database includes 3.4 million unique members, 207.1 million claims, 18.8 million episodes of care, 88,000 providers, and $52 billion in billed charges, and grows with each new release.

- The Exchange is being used to meet the unique information needs of each member and subscriber organization to increase the efficiency and improve the quality of health care in Wisconsin.

Back Row (left to right): Bob Phillips, MD, Marshfield Clinic; Lon Sprecher, Dean Health Plan; Mark Xistris, The Alliance; Julie Bartels, WHIO; Mark Moody, WEA Trust Insurance Co; Jim Riordan, WPS Insurance Co; Steve Brenton, Wisconsin Hospital Association; Larry Rambo, Humana; Lisa Ellinger, Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds; Bruce Weiss, MD, UnitedHealthcare. **Front Row:** Karen Timberlake, Wisconsin Department of Health Services; Jo Musser, WHIO; Dianne Kiehl, Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health; John Foley, Anthem BCBS; John Toussaint, MD, Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality. **Missing:** Susan Turney, MD, Wisconsin Medical Society.

The Goal: Provide Affordable, High-Quality Health Care to Wisconsin Residents and Serve as a National Model for Collaboration

Well in advance of the current national debate about how to improve the quality and reduce the cost of health care, the state of Wisconsin had begun a search to find ways for health care providers, insurance companies, and employers to collaborate and improve the transparency, quality, and efficiency of health care delivery.

Employers, as the primary payers of health care costs, were looking for comparative measures of quality and efficiency to understand the value of what they were buying. Physicians were being graded by insurers in a variety of ways and wanted to have input into how those measures and standards were developed. They also wanted credible data that could provide information to help them improve the quality of health care. Insurance companies were looking for ways to provide the best services to their customers at the fairest prices. And the state of Wisconsin wanted to ensure that its citizens received the best health care in the nation, delivered in the most efficient, affordable way.

Realizing they had the same goals in mind, in 2004, the state health department, providers, insurers, and employers began a discussion on how to best achieve those goals collaboratively. Shortly afterward, this collaborative spearheaded the effort to obtain legislation that led to the founding of the Wisconsin Health Information Organization (WHIO), a member-based non-profit organization, in 2005.

This groundbreaking, voluntary initiative brought together key private and public health care stakeholders to develop a statewide data mart of health care information that spans multiple providers and medical/hospital systems. The goal is to have the data mart provide a single, trusted source of information that all WHIO members and subscribers work from to identify opportunities to make improvements in the care and services they provide to Wisconsin citizens. The data can be used, for example, to identify gaps in care for treatment of chronic conditions, and provide real-world data about the costs per episode of care, population health, preventable hospital readmissions, variations in prescribing generic drugs, and much more.

> **"In some ways, this appears to be a technology project, but really, technology is only the means to the end. Ingenix understands that, knows what our ultimate goals are, and has helped us get to those goals very quickly, and with a high level of quality. We expect to achieve even more in the future."** —Julie Bartels, Executive Director, Wisconsin Health Information Organization

"What makes WHIO stand out is the level of engagement and collaboration of health care providers, insurers, purchasers, government agencies and information technology experts in pursuit of a common goal," says Julie Bartels, WHIO's executive director. "Health care consumers will be the biggest beneficiaries of this effort, because the analytical information will support healthy competition and drive improvements in quality, efficiency and overall value. And ultimately, we believe our effort may serve as a national model that others may use to advance their goals."

Building the Data Exchange

WHIO looked for a trusted and experienced partner to help build the WHIO Health Analytics Data Exchange, using health claims data and an analytical tool to report on the quality and efficiency of care delivered in Wisconsin. After a competitive and rigorous evaluation, WHIO chose Ingenix.

"We were looking for a collaborator, not just a vendor," Bartels says. "Ingenix wasn't just interested in the technical aspects of the project. They also wanted to work with us to develop strategies to help us achieve our mission, such as engaging the provider community." Under WHIO's direction, Ingenix built the data mart and provides the services to collect, aggregate, ensure data integrity, and maintain the database. Ingenix also provides the analytics tools, including a well-established episode grouper, as well as training, program management, and consulting services.

WHIO provides access to the centralized data mart, called The Exchange, which aggregates medical and pharmacy claims from organizations across Wisconsin to create a comprehensive source of health care information that can be used to examine variations in care delivered across the state. There are two types of partnership at WHIO: members, organizations that contribute data for aggregation; and subscribers, organizations that subscribe to access the aggregated data. Both members and subscribers are provided equal access to the de-identified data to run the analytics that support their business models.

Impact Intelligence is the Ingenix tool that enables those accessing the data mart to group the data and create reports from standardized templates or customize their own. Ingenix worked with WHIO to create the tools, but also provides training on how to pull and analyze the data based on their unique needs. By sharing this information widely with providers, payers, employers, the state, and ultimately consumers, best practices can be identified and rewarded, and improvements encouraged.

The Exchange contains an unprecedented volume and depth of data that spans multiple health care systems and settings, including physician's offices, outpatient services, pharmacy claims, labs, radiology, and hospitals. It can quantify performance over time, and study comparative performance. The analytics available through The Exchange can, for example, allow individual physicians and group practices to compare their performance to that of their peers across the state. Custom reports and the independent querying capabilities of The Exchange help identify best practices, gaps in care, and quality improvement opportunities.

"There isn't a database like this that's been available to providers to measure these sorts of things," says Larry Rambo, regional chief executive of Humana, and current chairman of WHIO. "And if you can't measure it, you can't improve it."

Ingenix has partnered with WHIO in other ways as well, including helping to proactively engage the provider community and to collaborate on a long-term, sustainable business model that supports WHIO's mission. Ingenix works directly with data contributors, and has helped WHIO establish collaboration and cooperation with members and stakeholders across the entire Wisconsin health care community. Ingenix CEO Andy Slavitt commented, "Ingenix has been honored to support WHIO in developing the collaboration and information-sharing that is needed to improve health care for communities. WHIO is an exemplary organization in this regard."

The Exchange: Providing New Insights

Access to the data in The Exchange was officially launched in the fall of 2009. Although it's too early to identify all the ways it will impact the Wisconsin health care system, the initial adoption and acceptance of the data are encouraging.

The Exchange database has grown rapidly since its inception, and now includes 3.4 million members, 207.1 million claims, 18.8 million episodes of care, 88,000 providers, and $52 billion in billed charges. And it continues to grow as additional insurers are being added.

Providers, payers, employers, and the state are using the data as a basis for understanding current practice patterns and identifying performance variation that might present opportunities for improvement in quality or efficiency of care delivery. The Wisconsin Medical Society, for example, is leading work groups composed of cardiologists, gastroenterologists, psychiatrists, and orthopedics to study WHIO provider performance reports and endeavor to understand the causes of variation in practice among their peers across the state. Work group participants were able to review care patterns for specific conditions and see the extent of variation in the amount and intensity of services delivered for patients with the same diagnosis and of similar health risk. The WHIO reports served as a platform for discussion about what care is appropriate and how it can be most efficiently and effectively delivered.

"Ingenix was selected as our IT partner and has consistently met or exceeded our expectations. The multi-year, multi-million dollar project has proceeded on time and within budget. As our partner, Ingenix frequently over-delivered on what they were contracted to do, contributing extra hours or consulting services to assure the quality of the overall deliverable. They see themselves as a business partner, rather than a vendor, and we do too." —Julie Bartels, Executive Director, Wisconsin Health Information Organization

"This work is notable because it's really about finding ways to take the best possible care of patients," explains Wisconsin Medical Society Senior Vice President Tim Bartholow, MD. "Wisconsin consistently is ranked at the top when it comes to providing high quality care, but there is always room to get even better. We believe by carefully examining the WHIO data, we will be able to identify areas with potential for improvement and support physicians in activities that will lead to higher quality patient care."

Using the data, health plans, insurers, and large, self-funded employers can determine disease prevalence and other health measures from their own populations, and compare them to the combined WHIO commercial and Medicaid populations. They can also compare the cost efficiency and quality effectiveness of providers within their networks, and implement programs to drive their members to those providers demonstrating the highest overall value.

Julie Bartels (WHIO), Karen Timberlake (Wisconsin Department of Health Services), and Larry Rambo (Humana) discuss how the WHIO data can help improve the quality of care in Wisconsin.

Karen Timberlake, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and a WHIO board member, explains, "To us, the real opportunity is to look across all the claims aggregated in Wisconsin to get a picture of where we have high-quality, cost-effective health care being delivered, and where we have an opportunity to improve the overall quality and cost-effectiveness of our health care delivery system."

Bartels adds "Ingenix helped us understand that using standardized pricing was one of the ways we could take some of the noise out of the system when comparing provider performance. For example, if someone were getting treatment for an upper respiratory issue, it may include an office visit, lab tests, an X-ray, prescription and maybe a follow-up visit in 10 days. But if some providers routinely order higher-cost scans such as a CAT/MRI rather than a simple X-ray, the cost of that episode of care increases dramatically. By using episode treatment groups and standardized pricing to compare the type and frequency of services used to treat patients of similar condition we can focus on who is using more or less resources to achieve the same result rather than be distracted by who has the highest or lowest cost."

In April of 2009, WHIO sponsored a Health Care Payment Reform Summit and invited health care thought leaders from across the state to consider how redesigning health care payment to reward high-value health care delivery in Wisconsin could result in higher quality and appropriate costs. The outcome of that summit was formation of the Wisconsin Payment Reform Initiative (WPRI). More than 120 physician, hospital, payer, and business community leaders volunteered to staff three work groups led by prominent Wisconsin physicians to design and implement pilot payment reform programs in the areas of acute care, chronic care, and preventive care. These groups are using WHIO data to understand care-delivery patterns and to find areas for focused improvement. They will create payment models, set benchmarks, and then use WHIO data and other clinical data sources to track progress over time.

Ultimately, WHIO's work is aimed not just at improving efficiency and reducing costs, but also improving health care for everyone in Wisconsin and even beyond the state. The Exchange will become even more valuable as more data is added. Wisconsin citizens will be able to get transparent, standardized information about the price and quality of health care across the state. And Bartels expects that Ingenix will continue to help WHIO accomplish its mission.

About Wisconsin Health Information Organization (WHIO)

Wisconsin Health Information Organization (WHIO) was formed in order to help improve the transparency, quality, and efficiency of health care delivery in the state of Wisconsin. It is a voluntary initiative whose members include health care providers, insurance companies, major employers, and public agencies that share a commitment to the future of health care. For more information about WHIO, please visit www.wisconsinhealthinfo.org.

WHIO Members and Subscribers

"Knowledge can change the world, and the diverse members of the Wisconsin Health Information Organization are putting shared knowledge into action to improve the transparency, quality and efficiency of health care."

WHIO Founding Member Organizations

1. The Alliance
2. Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin
3. Greater Milwaukee Business Group on Health
4. Humana, Inc.
5. UnitedHealthcare of Wisconsin
6. WEA Trust Insurance
7. Wisconsin Collaborative on Healthcare Quality
8. Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds
9. Wisconsin Department of Health
10. Wisconsin Hospital Association
11. Wisconsin Medical Society
12. Wisconsin Physicians Service Insurance Corporation

WHIO Members (non-Founding Health Plans who contribute data)

13. Dean Health Systems
14. Group Health Cooperative - South Central Wisconsin
15. Gundersen-Lutheran Health Plan
16. Health Tradition Health Plan
17. MercyCare Insurance Company
18. Network Health Plan
19. Physicians Plus Insurance
20. Security Health Plan

Subscribers

21. Aspirus
22. Aurora Health Care
23. Bellin Health
24. Prevea Health Care
25. ThedaCare
26. UW - Population Health

About Ingenix

Ingenix improves health care through information and technology. We believe that information is the lifeblood of health care. Applied at the right time and at the right place, when decisions need to be made, information can enhance the affordability, quality, usability and accessibility of care. Ingenix serves more than 250,000 diverse health care clients including insurance companies, federal/state agencies, pharmaceutical and biotech firms, Fortune 500 enterprises, hospitals and physicians within the health care community. For more information about Ingenix and its products and services, please visit www.ingenix.com.