Public Health Professionals’ Preparedness and Challenges in Implementing the Certified Electronic Health Records (EHR) for the Meaningful Use (MU) in Georgia - A Comparative Case Study

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INTRODUCTION

- Primary objective - to assess the readiness and challenges of public health professionals in implementing the Certified Electronic Health Records Technology for the MU in Health Districts of Georgia.
- Aim: to observe the status of the public health information systems’ installation and subsequent linking of the system with the State Health Department, Eligible Practitioners (EPs), Eligible Hospitals (EHs) and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)

METHODS

- Three Georgia Health Districts volunteered to participate in the case studies.
- The case study guiding questions were pretested before conducting the in-depth interviews which were face to face or through telephone.
- These interviews were transcribed and contents were rechecked to reduce overlap and redundancy of codes.
- Collapsed codes were arranged into themes: technical infrastructure and readiness; process readiness and required reporting; and leadership in policy and governance.
- The qualitative software N-Vivo was used to code qualitative data.

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health District A</th>
<th>Health District B</th>
<th>Health District C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current EHR system, Revenue, WHOIS/MS, clinical</strong></td>
<td>Visual Health Net, v. 11 with new public health modules, VHS certified v.11 in Ryan White Clinic</td>
<td>ACOIS v.10.0, Care was in Ryan White Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Not certified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funded</td>
<td>Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linkage with State Health System, GRTS</td>
<td>GRTS</td>
<td>GRTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linkage with State Health System, SendSS</td>
<td>Data flows directly to GRTS when entered in VHS</td>
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<td>Test support</td>
<td>Test support</td>
<td>Test support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recent updates after Dec 2013</td>
<td>Recent updates after Dec 2013</td>
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Cross Case Synthesis

- Challenges
  - Fear of change from paper to electronic
  - Lack of financial support to system upgrades
  - Time-consuming transfers from paper to electronic medical records
  - Differences in databases and versions of electronic system
  - Users’ training of the users
  - Technical support
  - Bandwidth is an issue
  - Immunization Registry (GRITS) - linked to the state health department
  - State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SendSS) and the Electronic Lab Reporting (ELR) - not linked for data entry directly into the systems
  - Health district leadership recommends:
    - MU processes is expensive
    - Requires funding, manpower and support from the State Health Department and Federal agencies
    - Needs integration of disparate systems into a single EHR system which could enhance public health

REFERENCES


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