

States Role in HIT and Health Information Exchange

On July 17 the eHealth Initiative Foundation (eHI) released an issue brief entitled “States Getting Connected: Quality and Safety Driving Health IT Planning in a Majority of the States in the U.S.” The issue brief highlights states’ role in driving improvements in quality and safety, through health information exchange. It is based on eHI’s 2006 Third Annual Survey of State, Regional and Community-Based Initiatives to Improving Health and Healthcare through HIT and Health Information Exchange of which 49 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico responded. A full report is scheduled to be released September 25 at the eHI Health Information Summit in Washington, DC.

Key findings of the report include:

1. Health information technology planning in states is on the rise, with 28 states initiating or in the process of planning. An additional seven states have plans completed and implementation underway.
2. About half of the states in the U.S. have either an executive order or a legislative mandate in place that is designed to stimulate the use of HIT to improve health and healthcare.
3. Primary drivers for state leadership around health information technology are quality, patient safety and curbing rising healthcare costs.
4. Most states are convening or participating in multi-stakeholder groups engaged in dialogue to develop plans for improving health and healthcare through HIT. And, increasingly states are providing grant funds to support not only regional and local HIE (Health Information Exchange) efforts, but also the development of plans.
5. In most cases, either the Governor's Office or the Department of Health is taking a leadership role in state-wide efforts related to HIT.
6. States from the get-go are recognizing the importance of local efforts, and are taking steps to closely integrate state initiatives with efforts at the regional and local levels.

The issue brief can be access at

<http://www.ehealthinitiative.org/news/StateReport2006.msp>.

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To access recent and past state health policy reports go to the State Health Policy section on the Chapter Leadership Network (CLN) website or click on:

http://www.acponline.org/cln/health_policy.htm.

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