

## Electronic Health Record (EHR) at the Tipping Point

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Evidence continues to mount that the EHR has reached or is at Tipping Point. Evidence includes the following:

- \* The Institute of Medicine publishes a report in 2000 that says 98,000 people die as a result of medical errors. They call for a system in which it is hard to make a mistake and easy to do the right thing.
- \* The Consolidated Health Informatics Initiative (CHIA), part of the E-Government Act of 2002 requires the adoption of existing health information interoperability, vocabulary and messaging standards. Thus far, the government has adopted 19 of 24 standards. ([www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/downloads/domain2.doc](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/downloads/domain2.doc))
- \* The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) authorizes the Secretary of HHA to make grants to physicians to help them implement electronic prescription drug programs starting 10/1/06
- \* President George W. Bush calls for computerizing health records in State of the Union Addresses in 2004 and 2005.
- \* President George W. Bush calls for the majority of Americans to have an interoperable electronic health record within ten years, 2005.
- \* The Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology is established and Dr. Brailer is named the National Health Information Technology Coordinator in 2004. He is charged with providing leadership for building a national electronic health information infrastructure in the US in 10 years and facilitating the vision for most Americans to have a personal health record by 2014.
- \* The Commission on Systemic Interoperability authorized by Congress in December 2003 as part of the Medicare Modernization Act, explores consumer and public stake in a national electronic health record.
- \* The Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT) is established August of 2004. It's purpose is to certify electronic health record software such that purchasers know they're getting something that meets the functional requirements of an EHR, is reliable, interoperable and secure.
- \* Implementation Support Organizations begin to form, such as the Physicians EHR Coalition (PEHRC) to assist physicians to acquire and use affordable standards-based EHR systems and other health information technology that would improve quality, enhance patient safety and increase efficiency.
- \* Tommy Thompson, former Secretary of HHS announces four goals and twelve strategies to advance progress toward President Bush's vision in 2004. The goals include informing clinicians, interconnecting clinicians, personalizing care and improving the population's health.
- \* Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs) whose goal is to expedite data sharing improve patient outcomes, reduce costs and coordinate administrative tasks stated forming throughout the country in 2005. Approximately 25 states have one or more RHIOs taking shape.
- \* The HIPAA Privacy and Security Rule established minimum standards for privacy and security to support electronic data exchange. (year?)
- \* The Veterans Administration makes medical record software available to physicians in (YEAR?). ([www.va.gov/vista](http://www.va.gov/vista), [www.ifmc.org](http://www.ifmc.org) and [VistA@ifmc.org](mailto:VistA@ifmc.org))
- \* ASTM is developing a minimum data set for a continuity of care record (CCR) to ensure continuity between care settings. The CCR is a rudimentary way to connect and exchange certain pieces of data between electronic health record information systems.

- \* The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is providing funding through a number of programs to support IT application adoption, data sharing and interoperability. ([www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov))
- \* The National Health Information Technology Resource Center has been established and funded for five years to gather information to help implement IT and support planning, implementation and demonstration projects funded by AHRQ and other federal programs
- \* The AMA establishes a CPT code effective July 1, 2004 that helps facilitate the coding and payment of physicians for evaluating and managing patient encounters with an established patient via a secure communication network.
- \* MedFusion and AAFP announced an agreement that allows active AAFP members to create free web sites and communicate with patients via a secure communication network ([www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org) or [www.medfusion.net](http://www.medfusion.net))
- \* The Markle and Wood Foundations published several reports suggesting actions the government might take to help healthcare organization overcome funding and legal obstacles to the electronic health record
- \* Pay for Performance (P4) initiatives (one way of funding the EHR) are piloted in at least five states
- \* Health Information Technology Leadership Panel commissioned by Office of the Coordinator for Health Information Technology publishes final report, March 2005. The Report identified three key imperatives: 1) Widespread adoption of interoperable HIT should be a top priority for the U.S. health care system; 2) The federal government should use its leverage as the nation's largest health care payer and provider to drive adoption of HIT; and 3) Private sector purchasers and health care organizations can and should collaborate alongside the federal government to drive adoption of HIT.
- \* Patrick Kennedy and Timothy Murphy introduce the 21st Century Health Information Act, which would establish a National Technical Assistance Center and provide up to twenty-- three year grants for RHIOs, May 2005.
- \* HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt announces contracts totaling \$18.6 million to develop prototypes for a Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) architecture. "The Nationwide Health Information Network contracts will bring together technology developers with doctors and hospitals to create innovative state-of-the-art ideas for how health information can be securely shared," Secretary Leavitt said. "This effort will help design an information network that will transform our health care system resulting in higher quality, lower costs, less hassle and better care for American consumers."

Secretary of HHS, Mike Leavitt 500-Day Plan, announced in May of 2005, includes a vision that nearly all health records can be linked through an interoperable system that protects privacy as it connects patients, providers and payers—resulting in fewer medical mistakes, less hassle, lower costs and better health. Recent evidence continues to indicate a focused effort to achieving each aspect of the plan.