

Project Title: Rhode Island Statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE) State and Regional Demonstration Project (currently known as *currentcare*)

Principal Investigator: Zimmerman, Amy, M.P.H.

Organization: Rhode Island Department of Health

Contract Number: 290-04-0007

Project Period: 09/04 – 08/10

AHRQ Funding Amount: \$5,000,000

Summary Status as of: December 2008

Strategic Goal: To develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to support patient-centered care, the coordination of care across transitions in care settings, and the use of electronic exchange of health information to improve quality of care.

Business Goal: Implementation and Use

Summary: The Rhode Island Information Exchange Project, *currentcare*, is one of six AHRQ-sponsored State and regional demonstration (SRD) projects begun in late 2004 and early 2005 to create non-profit health information exchanges (HIEs). Each of the SRDs is developed using a variety of approaches (e.g., technical, business, and governance models) in order to support data sharing and interoperability on a State or regional level; conduct analyses of the role of the Medicaid program; provide an evaluation of their project; and develop a sustainability model.

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) is collaborating with the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) and stakeholders across the State to develop, implement, and evaluate an interconnected statewide health information system that uses a master patient index (MPI) to help put the right information into the hands of clinicians and their patients when and where it is needed. The RI HIE system, known as *currentcare*, is intended to evolve into a broadly interconnected statewide health information network to improve the quality, safety, and value of health care services and to support critical public health needs to improve the health of the broader Rhode Island population.

The project includes activities to design, develop, test, deploy, and evaluate the initial phase of a secure and reliable HIE governed by RIQI, the State-designated regional health information organization (RHIO). EDS is the lead technical vendor providing integration services for *currentcare*, which uses a customized version of HealthShare, an off-the-shelf proprietary HIE application that links longitudinal patient-level information from source data systems and provides a Web-accessible viewer to authorized users in any setting. *Currentcare* is in development, with system testing scheduled to begin in first quarter 2009 and implementation targeted for fall 2009. Initial types of data to be exchanged during the project period include laboratory results and medication history, with others to be added as rapidly as is feasible. Eventually, *currentcare* will include interfaces with electronic medical record (EMR) systems.

Currentcare is being implemented in accordance with the RI HIE Act of 2008, which stipulates privacy and confidentiality protections for the RI HIE that are stricter than other State and Federal health information privacy laws. Both the policy and technology decisions in the project have been profoundly influenced by community guidance and, as such, the rationale, impact, and results of this guidance will be a major focus of the project evaluation.

Specific Aims

- Improve the quality, safety and value of health care in the State of Rhode Island through the ongoing use and growth of a sustainable statewide health information exchange system. **(Ongoing)**
- Incorporate an MPI into the HIE to locate longitudinal patient health information from numerous data-submitting partners statewide. Design the HIE so that consumers will be allowed to control access to their data. **(Achieved)**
- Implement the capability to present data from various sources in an integrated, patient-centric manner using a common user interface. **(Upcoming)**
- Successfully transition all operating, management, and governance responsibility of the HIE to a community-based RHIO. **(Upcoming)**

2008 Activities: In 2008, project stakeholders worked with the technical vendor team at EDS to finalize all system requirements, infrastructure, architecture plans, and the detailed design specifications for *currentcare*. Technical development focused largely on the incorporation of a two-phased patient consent approach and patient enrollment capabilities prompted by privacy and security policy developments. RIQI began efforts to obtain consumer permissions (enrollment) in fall 2008 using various strategies, including community outreach and education, training and development among providers, and paper-based and electronic marketing strategies. Enrollment efforts also targeted Medicaid beneficiaries. Efforts to connect initial data submitting partners and develop contractual agreements are ongoing.

In May 2008, RIQI was designated as the State's RHIO following an open bid process and entered into a transitional contract with HEALTH, which set forth a timeline for RIQI to assume management and operation of *currentcare*. HEALTH continues to work extensively with RIQI in support of its efforts to assume all responsibilities for the HIE as an operational RHIO by fall 2010. Approximately 60 percent of *currentcare* policies have been developed, refined, and approved through a stakeholder-driven process; all initial policies are on schedule to be completed by summer 2009.

Preliminary Impact and Findings: None as of yet.

Selected Outputs

HEALTH has submitted a series of required planning documents to AHRQ pertaining to implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of *currentcare*. Consent policy development activities and related delays in system acquisition and implementation have pushed out the schedule for demonstration of live data exchange. To allow for completion of the technical solution, including full installation and testing of the consent management application that has been custom developed for the project by EDS and InterSystems, the ability to demonstrate data sharing capability in a production environment will occur in fall 2009.

Enrollment of consumers and contractual engagement of community enrollment partners is fully underway. In anticipation of full implementation, to date, there are approximately 1,500 persons who have provided permission to include their health information in *currentcare*. Information about the *currentcare* system and its policies may be found on the Web at www.currentcareri.com. Accessed May 2008.

- Attended National HISPC meeting, April 2008
- Presented "Financing the Rhode Island HIE" to the National Governor's Association in Washington, D.C., June 12, 2008.

- Presented at the SRD Meeting in Delaware, July 29-30, 2008. Topics included an overview of the RI Evaluation Plan, status of 100 percent data exchange deliverable, and an overview of the approach to sustainability.
- Presented at the National Governors Association State e-Health Alliance regarding Rhode Island's HIE legislation and consent model for *currentcare*.
- Attended HISPC Consent Collaborative Meeting, December 2008
Presented at RI Health Information Management Association (State AHIMA Chapter) to increase awareness of the RI HIE and provide an opportunity for medical records professionals to discuss the implications of the HIE on their work, April 9, 2008.
- Presented to RI Council of Community Mental Health Organizations, May 16, 2008.
- In January and July 2008, this HIE participated in two in-person meetings with fellow AHRQ-sponsored SRDs to share lessons learned, share general information, and plan for upcoming project-specific deliverables, such as plans for evaluation and developing a sustainability plan.
- In late 2008 and onward, this HIE contributed to the AHRQ-sponsored manuscript entitled, *Liability for Regional Health Information Organizations: Lessons from the AHRQ-Funded State and Regional Demonstration Projects and Other Community Efforts*, [available online](http://www.healthit.ahrq.gov) at <http://www.healthit.ahrq.gov>.