

Executive Summary

The Health Information Technology Portfolio in 2011

Research funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Health Information Technology (IT) Portfolio contributes to efforts for improving health care nationwide by demonstrating health IT innovations in various health care settings. The Portfolio staff works collaboratively with staff from other AHRQ Centers and Portfolios, as well as other Federal and outside partners. The Portfolio's body of research represents some of the most important sources of evidence regarding the impact of technology on improving quality, safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of health care. The research conducted in 2011 has generated evidence and insight that can facilitate successful design, implementation, and use of health IT. The Portfolio team hopes that this work will serve as a catalyst for further research and collaborations across the research community.

The projects funded through the Health IT Portfolio are conducted in real care delivery settings and identify the practical issues of health IT research, such as:

- Obtaining buy-in from staff and clinicians.
- Informing the effective implementation of health IT, especially in underserved and under-resourced areas.
- Evaluating costs and benefits of health IT.
- Identifying barriers and facilitators to implementation.
- Understanding the impact of health IT.

Report Purpose and Organization

The AHRQ Health IT 2011 Annual Report is designed to disseminate information on the research areas at both the Portfolio and project levels. The report describes activities that took place throughout the year, and synthesizes outputs, challenges, and successes of the 169 projects active in calendar year 2011. Dissemination activities of the project teams and the AHRQ Health IT staff are also highlighted.

Report Availability

The report is available as an easy-to-access Web-based document through the AHRQ-funded project search tool on the National Resource Center for Health IT (NRC) Web site (www.healthit.ahrq.gov). The NRC provides a platform to support outreach and delivery of information from AHRQ, and to share expertise across the multidisciplinary fields that are engaged in critical aspects of health IT research.

In addition, individual project summaries for the grants and contracts are available on the NRC Web site. The project summaries provide an overview and status updates of each of the projects' long-term objectives and specific aims, updates on completed or ongoing project activities, and preliminary or final findings and impact. The summaries are an excellent resource for implementers of health IT, prospective research applicants, and others interested in the challenges and successes of health IT implementation and use in terms of research and practical application. They describe the characteristics of successful research projects and principal investigators' abilities to adjust and persevere through the real-world challenges

and setbacks encountered in health IT research. To view the annual summaries of these projects, please visit: www.healthit.ahrq.gov/portfolio. You may click on different states on the United States map or select projects by categories such as Principal Investigator or Technology.

2011 Annual Report Highlights

AHRQ's Health IT Portfolio comprised 169 projects in 2011 consisting of 129 grants and 40 contracts. Projects are diverse, representing the full range of technologies, care settings, and geography, including organizations in 36 States and the District of Columbia.

Highlights of the activities accomplished in 2011:

- The Enabling Quality Measurement (EQM) Through Health IT grant initiative, one of four Ambulatory Safety and Quality (ASQ) RFAs, concluded. The ASQ initiative, established in 2007, supported grants to improve the safety and quality of ambulatory health care in the United States. The research funded under the EQM program added to the knowledge base on developing safety and quality measures in ambulatory care settings, automating quality measurement, demonstrating the ability of electronic data systems to expand potential safety and quality measures, and demonstrating improved ability to export data for reporting performance on measures and improvement.
- The remaining three of the six contracts supporting AHRQ's 5-year State and Regional Demonstrations in Health IT concluded. These projects, in Delaware, Rhode Island, and Utah, supported data sharing and exchange activities aimed at improving health care on a State or regional level, and examined characteristics of health information organizations. The six States developed a variety of approaches to health information exchange, with different technical, business, and governance models.
- The Portfolio released the first in a series of videos highlighting successful projects from grantees and contractors which can serve as a good example for future projects. The first video highlighted the development of DVD segments by Kate Lapane, Ph.D., and her research team on various health topics to help older adults address medication challenges. The video can be found at: www.healthit.ahrq.gov/AHRQHealthITSuccessStoriesLapaneVideo. Other videos, as well as written stories, are available at: www.healthit.ahrq.gov/SuccessStories.
- The National Research Council of the National Academies of Science conducted a project and formed a multidisciplinary consensus panel of recognized experts to examine a diverse range of behavioral and human factors issues resulting from recent trends and challenges associated with the increasing migration of medical devices, technologies, and care practices into the home. The project resulted in a consensus report identifying and discussing major human factors issues in home health care, as well as a brief companion designer's guide for home health care information technology.

AHRQ's Health IT Portfolio supports the Agency's broad mission by demonstrating where health IT improves quality, safety, and effectiveness, enhancing the evidence base for health IT, and preparing the field for effective use of future innovations. We hope that the reader will find the report helpful and informative and that the projects inspire innovative research and collaboration across the research and health care community. To find this report online, please visit: www.healthit.ahrq.gov/HIT2011AnnualReport.