



# Spokane County MEDICAL SOCIETY

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## MEDICAL INFORMATICS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 1, 2009

The SCMS Medical Informatics Committee met at 6:45 am on October 1, 2009, in the conference room at the Spokane County Medical Society. Those present included Brian Seppi, Mike McDaniels, Bev Roberts, Sean Rowe, Jon Copeland, Craig Nielsen, Sam Palpant, Torney Smith, Jac Davies, Glen Stream, Gordon Decker, David Bare, and Stefan Humphries. George McAlister was staff.

### CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2009 MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:55 a.m. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the minutes of September 3, 2009.

#### 1. NMIS Conference

Jac Davies reported that this year's Northwest Medical Informatics (NMIS) Symposium, which was held at the Davenport Hotel on September 10-11, was a success. Two suggestions were that NMIS offer more plenary sessions and that the conference was somewhat lengthy (The symposium lasted 1 ½ days preceded by pre-conference programs).

#### 2. GE HIE Presentation

Dr. Stefan Humphries arranged for all SCMS Medical Informatics Committee members attending the Northwest Medical Informatics Symposium (NMIS) to meet with John-Michael Smith of GE Healthcare to discuss issues relating to health information exchange (HIE). A number of questions were posed as to how HIE would technically work for our community. Most surprising was that the cost was less expensive than anticipated: approximately \$200,000 to get a community of our size operational. Regarding interoperability, the GE system is likely compatible with other EMR's. It was also positive to hear that Spokane would not be a beta site: GE has their HIE system up and running in other, like-sized communities. The next step would be to get a proposal from GE specifically for Spokane. **ACTION ITEM:** The committee felt that rather than moving forward with an RFP at this time, it would be best to wait for more information on what is happening with HIE at the state and national levels.

#### 3. ARRA/HCA Updates

A recent meeting was held by the National Governors Association State Alliance for e-Health to offer guidance to states as they begin to develop initiatives to implement the Health IT for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). To receive an implementation grant, a state must have a plan approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It was clear in the meeting that one of the main issues will be "meaningful use", as the HITECH Act provides incentive payments to providers who have adopted EHR systems and meet the statutory requirements for meaningful use. Generally, meaningful use includes key components such as:

- a. The EHR must be certified and include e-prescribing capabilities;
- b. The technology must allow for EHR exchange with other systems;
- c. The system must produce various clinical and quality reports (yet to be defined)

Unfortunately, a clear definition for meaningful use has not yet been established but states will be under pressure to help physicians meet this requirement. As a reminder, two specific HITECH priority grant programs will lay the groundwork for meaningful use of electronic health records (EHRs). These programs are meant to offer assistance to health care providers in the selection and incorporation of EHRs into clinical practice, and to assure that statewide information exchange is developed to achieve nationwide connectivity across the health care system. The first grant program, the Health Information Technology Extension Program, will fund dozens of Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers across the country. The regional extension centers will hopefully, offer hospitals and clinicians hands-on technical assistance to support meaningful use of certified EHR systems. The second grant program will help states and qualified State Designated Entities (SDEs) to develop or align the necessary policies, procedures and network systems to assist electronic information exchange within and across states, and ultimately throughout the health care system. The Washington State

Health Care Authority (HCA) was mandated by Governor Gregoire to become the lead coordinating agency for a statewide plan. There has been a huge response to these funding requests.

#### **4. Roundtable Discussion**

**ACTION ITEM:** It was recommended that the committee begin an outreach effort to inform SCMS members about the HITECH initiative. Perhaps the committee could submit a summary, gleaned from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) Website (at <http://healthit.hhs.gov/>), for publication in the SCMS newsletter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by the individual whose name appears below:

Stefan Humphries, Chair