



Spokane County MEDICAL SOCIETY

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MEDICAL INFORMATICS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

May 14, 2009

The SCMS Medical Informatics Committee met at 6:45 am on May 14, 2009 in Room 263 at the Deaconess Health and Education Center. Those present included Torney Smith, Sam Palpant, Glen Stream, Sonny Varadan, Sean Rowe, Gary Cantlon, Jon Copeland, Cole Hanford, Craig Nielsen, David Henzler, Stefan Humphries, Daniel Engle, Daniel Bare, Bev Roberts, Mike McDaniels and Jac Davies. George McAlister was staff.

1. Introduction of New Chairman

Dr. Stefan Humphries, Medical Director at St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, introduced himself to the committee and chaired the meeting.

2. New Mission and Vision Statement for the Committee

Dr. Humphries will locate the original mission/vision statement for future discussion on this topic. In the past the Medical Informatics Committee has served the very important functions of 1) bringing together individuals from different parts of the community; and 2) advocating for physicians in terms of information sharing and helping to facilitate the adoption of an EMR.

3. Stimulus Package Update

Jac Davies reported that the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is expected to release their spending plan sometime near the end of May. A majority of stimulus funds will pass from the HHS Office of the National Coordinator to the States for distribution, with the States issuing RFP's. Other funds will be distributed directly through the HHS National Coordinator. In the State of Washington, the WA State Health Care Authority will take the lead on this issue, working with the State Legislature to define high priority data sets. Health information exchange has been mandated as a priority by the Legislature. The HCA is also working with other state agencies to determine their priorities. Jac Davies is leading a subcommittee to determine availability of funds for local HIT projects. Torney Smith expressed his interest in joining this subcommittee; Jon Copeland will send a representative from Inland Imaging; and Sonny Varadan will find a participant from Providence. Revisiting the Medical Informatics Mission/Vision statement will also help to define target priorities.

4. American Recovery and Reinvest Act 2009

Jon Copeland distributed and discussed a handout on the recent Stimulus Bill. Jon specifically called attention to the looming shortage of HIT workers. Some estimates place the national HIT worker shortage over the next 5 years as 40,000. There have been recent talks with Eastern Washington University about applying for a workforce development grant to add healthcare informatics as one of their undergraduate degrees, and then making available local internship opportunities upon graduation.

5. Follow up on Health Information Exchange

Jac Davies, Sam Palpant, Glen Stream, Jon Copeland and Stefan Humphries met as a special subcommittee to propose recommendations that might be appropriate for stimulus funding. Sonny Varadan was elected as subcommittee chair. As health information exchange (HIE) is one of our local priorities, the subcommittee will put together a Request for Information (RFI) to find interested vendors. The RFI will be written in a "use case" format to ask vendors to describe how their product will respond specifically to proposed scenarios. Subcommittee members will review vendor recommendations and then invite the best prospects to attend the full committee meeting. These pre-planning efforts by the subcommittee will allow us to respond quickly to any future funding opportunities.

6. Meeting Scheduling

A motion was proposed, seconded and approved that the Medical Informatics Committee begin meeting on a year-round basis and avoid the usual summer hiatus. The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2009 at 6:45. It was also recommended that the July meeting be re-scheduled for the second Thursday (because of the 4th of July holiday).

7. Open Discussion

It was recommended that a subcommittee be formed to conduct a survey of SCMS members to determine who are using EMR's: how they are using it, barriers to adoption, how can we help, etc. Because of traditionally low survey response rates (electronically, and by mail or FAX), it was recommended that the survey be conducted as a random set of representative site visits. The overall goal would be to help community practitioners prepare to adopt or implement an EMR. Glen Stream and David Henzler will work with Jac Davies and Doug Weeks to develop a list of survey questions and to establish the appropriate methodology for conducting the survey.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by the individual whose name appears below:

Stefan Humphries, Chair