In the 1960s, the United States spent big bucks to explore the next frontier. The federal government spent billions of dollars over eight years to develop the technology that made it possible for Neil Armstrong to take those historic first steps on the moon. (continued on page 4)
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Now, with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the country is again spending billions of dollars over a multi-year period to achieve a distinct goal: Namely, the implementation and adoption of electronic health records for all Americans.

Although there are many similarities between the two initiatives, there is one curious difference: With the space program, only a select group of astronauts had to adopt the technologies. With the current initiative, health care organizations, clinicians and patients across the country will have to utilize electronic health records, according to Mark Leavitt, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT).

“This, more or less, is about changing the behaviors of organizations and individuals in health care,” Leavitt says. “In some ways, it is harder because the technology is already built and the bill is centered on the adoption and meaningful use of that technology.”

(continued on page 8)
What is the principal value of the certification effort for hospitals and medical groups?

The CCHIT program was originally developed to facilitate adoption of EHRs by the ambulatory physician community. Initial CCHIT criteria focused on functional requirements and grew to include aspects of security and interoperability. Expansion to specialty areas such as pediatrics and cardiology followed, and eventually acute care EHRs were also brought under the CCHIT umbrella. The greatest benefit of certification is that it provides baseline standards for functionality, security and interoperability that serve as a starting point to EHR selection. Provider organizations that are looking for EHRs can then begin their product search with a short list of vendors that are not only established in the HIT community, but are committed to staying current with Federal standards that impact the quality of health care delivery. Having this short list of vendors allows organizations to focus their evaluation on the product specifics pertinent to their unique provider needs (e.g. workflow, ease of use, support and implementation methodology, etc).

Will certification speed adoption of healthcare IT industry-wide and with the new administration?

Certification should reduce the time spent evaluating EHRs, and as the only federally recognized standards body on EHRs, CCHIT’s stamp of approval should also encourage the adoption of EHRs. Since the extensive certification criteria has been carefully vetted and implemented over the past several years, practices and hospitals should be confident that CCHIT certified products have been tested in clinic and hospital environments, and are viable tools for quality assurance and compliance.

What other certification efforts may be needed in the future?

Certification of other types of healthcare related technologies, such as tools used to support health information exchanges (HIEs) and personal health record (PHR) systems are just beginning to be evaluated for CCHIT. In addition, certification efforts may start to address more specific physician needs, including geographic region, practice/organization size, sub-specialty, etc. Certification may also be expanded to incorporate user- or role-based abilities, whereby physicians could become “certified” in product use to be eligible for increased incentives. As this evolves, it will be critical to ensure that the certification criteria and the process to become certified remain affordable for all participants, strategically relevant to the original charter, and do not become too cumbersome, in order to continue to encourage EHR adoption and utilization.

CORPORATE PROFILE

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2008 CCHIT CERTIFIED
Category: Ambulatory, Cardiovascular Medicine, Child Health
Product: Solution Series 6.3.0
Certification Date: 02/03/2009

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2008 CCHIT CERTIFIED
Category: Ambulatory EMR
Product: SmartClinic
Certification Date: 09/30/08

CONTACT INFORMATION
VIP Medicine LLC
Sales: (201) 675-1507
Support: (800) 652-3739
Fax: (201) 701-0254
www.vipmedicine.com

What is the principal value of the certification effort for hospitals and medical groups?
Electronic medical record software evolved from disparate systems based on customized needs of various offices and healthcare facilities. The principle of certification is to screen software to assure that it meets a predefined list of non-disparate standards that include a minimal set of features and/or functionality. The value is that the user has a trusted source of verification and does not have to undertake the effort, incur costs, or suffer delays in what might be their own verification process. The power of this process has become so highly recognized that it is rapidly becoming the bases for increasing physician’s reimbursements from the U.S. government.

Will certification speed adoption of healthcare IT industry-wide and with the new administration?
Certification will provide a defacto standard for the new administration to establish minimal guidelines for additional physician incentives. While this will help fan the embers of adoption, the process will still be painfully slow. The incentives, as perceived by physicians, are minimal and don’t approach compensating for financial losses associated with staff training time, and direct revenue loss due to distractions from patient care. Physicians are simply not yet believers that EMR software will make their lives easier. We all appreciate receiving legible organized notes from other physicians but most are not ready to expend the effort to produce those notes.

What other certification efforts may be needed in the future?
Certification should validate results, not dictate methodology. The needed certification effort should focus on validation of what is transmitted in the continuity of care document (CCD). Although we now have many electronic solutions for the medical record, they are all still disparate solutions from systems with no common means of communication. The CCD is the function that will truly facilitate the delivery of medical care through interoperability. If the CCD were certified, there would be little need to certify EMRs, as long as the output exchanged was validated. This would promote new and innovative design concepts, where standards are based on results rather than based on the certifier’s view of how technology is to be applied.
With the government providing the financial incentives for more research, more development and more spending on information technology, many in the health care industry will be looking for ways to make sure that they are moving in the right direction, according to Leavitt. Certainly, with about $45,000 in incentives available to each physician and about $2 million on the table for each hospital, providers are likely to be looking for some guidance as they venture into the electronic health records arena, Leavitt predicts.

As such, purchasing and implementing a system that is endorsed by CCHIT is expected to become even more important as all members of the health care industry seek to adopt the health care information technologies that will help them meet the “meaningful use” requirements stipulated in the bill.

“The challenge for us is to make sure that all providers who are eligible and interested in the technology have access to a certified electronic health record system,” Leavitt says. “Spurred by new government initiatives and funding, we think 2009 will see an across-the-board acceleration in health IT activities: more research and development, accelerated adoption, and new financial incentives that demand realization of the full benefits in quality, safety and efficiency. It’s the right time to add more flexibility to our approach, so we can fine tune our programs to meet everyone’s needs for health IT certification.”
Russell Keene
Vice President

CORPORATE PROFILE
Ingenix, a wholly-owned subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), transforms organizations and improves health care through information and technology. Organizations rely on its innovative products, services and consulting to improve the delivery and operations of their business. More information about Ingenix can be obtained at www.ingenix.com. Join us at HIMSS booth #626 to learn how our technology solutions can help you meet the extraordinary challenges you face today.

2007 CCHIT CERTIFIED
Category: Ambulatory EHR
Products: Ingenix CareTracker, Version 6.2
Certification Date: 06/11/2008

CONTACT INFORMATION
Ingenix
12125 Technology Drive
Eden Prairie, Minnesota  55344
(866) 427-6802
www.ingenix.com/caretracker
info@ingenix.com

What is the principal value of the certification effort for hospitals and medical groups?
When a vendor is certified providers are ensured that core functionality exists within an application. Certification then becomes the foundation to begin the buying process. Vendors differentiate themselves based upon ease of use, interoperability, service and costs. Some argue that certification restricts innovation that might streamline the needs of the physician-patient experience. We believe innovation can thrive with existing CCHIT parameters and still allow plenty of room to make a meaningful difference for physicians. The EHR certification effort promotes standardized communication among all providers and sets functionality benchmarks that give providers confidence that their EHR will remain current as EHR functionality evolves. EHR certification standards, combined with stimulus dollars, will help empower physicians in small practices with the same tools and benefits available to their peers in large practices or hospitals. In the long term, certified EHRs will simplify the exchange of clinical data to support quality measurements and improve care. By enabling secure data-sharing and interoperability across the entire health system, certified EHRs will create an environment where the right information in the right place can drive better patient outcomes.

Will certification speed adoption of healthcare IT industry-wide and with the new administration?
Making it easy to use, providing options to incrementally adopt functionality, ensuring that the patient-physician experience is not compromised, and eliminating the negative impact on physician incomes need to remain in focus when evaluating how certification will impact HIT. When doctors become satisfied customers and elect to use an EHR due to its affordability and value-add, we will see accelerated industry adoption.

Industry experts believe the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT) will be the certifying body because it has already created a credible, efficient and rigorous certification process. Therefore, physicians just beginning their EHR selection process should review CCHIT-Certified products, such as Ingenix CareTracker EMR. The options available to physicians seeking EHR solutions are much more user-friendly, cost efficient and future-proofed than they were even 18 months ago. Ingenix CareTracker is CCHIT-certified and can be implemented for under five thousand dollars and with hours, not days, of training. Early adopters of certified EHRs will begin improving quality, reducing costs and increasing revenue almost immediately upon implementation.

What other certification efforts may be needed in the future?
Efforts to refine existing ambulatory, emergency and inpatient EHR certification will be an ongoing need to further enhance interoperability and ensure security as HIT needs evolve. Standardized technologies to support efficient document exchange along the continuum of care and standardized, coded medical vocabulary are also critical needs. In addition, specialty areas, such as cardiovascular medicine, behavioral health and children’s health, are potential candidates for future EHR certification given the large patient population affected.
Recovery Act Spurs CCHIT to Expand Scope

(continued from page 8)

To meet this burgeoning demand, CCHIT is expanding its certification programs.

The Commission plans to develop six new programs—Behavioral Health, Clinical Research, Dermatology, Long Term Care Spectrum, Advanced Interoperability and Advanced Quality—for launch in 2010. Oncology, Eye Care, Advanced Security and Advanced Clinical Decision Support will be added to the roster of certification options in 2011 while Obstetrics/Gynecology will be added in 2012 (see chart).

The “advanced” certifications are being offered for vendors that have already achieved basic certification but can meet more rigorous requirements that prove that their technologies are on the cutting edge in a particular area.

“These advanced certifications will give vendors a competitive advantage. If providers are looking for an electronic health records system and there are 40 products in the market but they have to deal with pay for performance requirements, the provider might then want to investigate only those systems that have been deemed to offer advanced quality capabilities. On the other hand, if a provider is in an area where there is very little pay for performance, they might not have the incentive to pay for such advanced capabilities,” Leavitt says.

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<tr>
<th>Certification Options</th>
<th>2009</th>
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</table>
What is the principal value of the certification effort for hospitals and medical groups?

Healthcare has been, and to some extent, remains a Tower of Babel, with each system and organization speaking their own language. This has impeded the ability to gain efficiencies across healthcare organizations, and ultimately compromised the patient and the provider. Certification is the initial step in standardizing information flows, between healthcare entities and providers, and ultimately to patients. It represents the ability and willingness of a software provider to participate in, and across, the healthcare community. This will only benefit all hospitals and medical groups which adopt a certified application.

Equally important to the practicing physician, certification will be a catalyst and requirement for practices to receive funds under the Stimulus program. While meaningful use is one defined term, the utilization of an EHR application to meet future certified criteria is also contemplated in the current legislation. So while there are numerous benefits of certification, there are real economic benefits as well.

Will certification speed adoption of healthcare IT industry-wide and with the new administration?

Having reviewed the Stimulus package, the current CCHIT requirements may only be a portion of the future certification requirements. Additional criteria may be set forth by the HIT Policy Committee or the HIT Standards Committee. With 20 people being appointed to the HIT Policy Committee, and 20 people to the HIT Standards Committee, and only one of these 40 people required to be a physician, it is very possible that objectives of those Committees do not align with those of practicing physicians.

Depending on how onerous the additional certification criteria becomes, or how defocused from basic healthcare to supporting other peripheral agendas, may determine the speed of adoption and deployment. While the administration has tied economic incentives to adoption, it is not inconceivable for a physician to determine that a positive return on investment does not exists, and to decide to concierge their practice. Also if certification requires vendors to spend all their resources meeting criteria that might or might not be applicable for physicians, it could slow down deployment of other features that might be more critical to the success of IT adoption.

What other certification efforts may be needed in the future?

While there may be future certification efforts, they should focus on the data coming from or to the physician, not the practice of medicine. The certification should focus on better ways for physicians to exchange structured information with other physicians and with patients. Certification should never be a substitute for a physician’s experience, observations, and judgment.

Michael Nissenbaum
President and CEO

CORPORATE PROFILE
Founded in 1998, iMedica Corporation is an innovator in the development of electronic health records (EHRs) and practice management (PM) solutions for physician practices. The company recently launched its newest PM/EHR solution for physician practices—Transition™. The single application allows physicians to adopt EHR technology that lets them maintain their workflow, stay within their budget, and prepare for a full EMR system implementation, all at a fraction of the cost of a typical PM/EHR system.

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