



The Role of IT in Driving Clinical Decision Support, Reduction of Readmissions, and Improvements in Care Transitions

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Promise of Information Technology in Health Care

- Standardize workflows
- Improve provider and patient adherence to national guidelines
- Simultaneously reduce costs and improve care delivery
- Facilitate communication among all members of the health care team





Reality of Information Technology in Health Care

- Workflows are anything but standard
- Guideline adherence is minimally improved
- More effort is spent on documentation than delivering more cost-effective care
- Communication is as fragmented as it ever was before major health IT investments in the last decade





Redefining the paradigm

- Use information technology to support workflow changes rather than expect implementing information technology will provide the expected health gains





Clinical decision support

- Goal: Spend more time with patients with poorly-controlled diabetes rather than seeing everyone with diabetes at regular intervals
- Implications:
 - Stratify patients by level of disease control
 - Spend at least some time working with patients outside office visits (scheduling, medication refills)
 - Sicker patients are seen more frequently than those who are less sick





Reducing readmissions/Care transitions

- Goal: Reduce readmissions through updating all members of the care team about hospitalization
- Implications:
 - Content (care summary, instructions about urgencies and emergencies, outstanding items)
 - Speed (while the patient is leaving a care setting)
 - Comprehension (“teach back,” patient’s language)
 - Reaching all members (patient, caregiver, primary care provider, specialist)





Summary

- Health information technology cannot improve health care alone
- In combination with clearly defined clinical metrics, health information technology can help improve the quality of health care delivered
- Additional work is needed to identify those patient-centric measures that are most closely aligned with health improvements

