

Abstract

Project Title	Santa Cruz BeACOn (SCB) Consortium — Integrating Health Information Technology and Exchange into Care Delivery to Improve Transitions in Care
Service Area	Santa Cruz County, California; Hospital Referral Region (HRR) #87 Zip codes 95001, 95003, 95005-07, 95010, 95017-19, 95033, 95041, 95060-67, 95073, 95076-77.
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Project Goals and Objectives: Building on one of the most advanced health information exchange (HIE) environments in the nation and a high rate of electronic health record (EHR) adoption (68%) in a diverse demographic region, the Santa Cruz BeACOn (SCB) consortium plans to integrate health information technology (HIT) and HIE into care delivery, with an initial focus on transitions of care. Transitions of care — e.g., between a hospital and a primary care clinic — are among the most expensive, urgent, and common problems within the health care system. Specific goals include:

- **Advancing** HIT/HIE to enable transformation of care coordination during transitions of care (by extending Santa Cruz County’s existing HIT/HIE infrastructure and integrating HIT/HIE into transitions of care);
- **Integrating** HIT/HIE into care delivery to reduce missed opportunities for decreasing cost, improving quality and promoting patient-centered care (by decreasing regional per capita health costs; preventing avoidable ED visits, hospitalizations, and re-admissions; promoting the use of medical homes) and enhancing successful transitions in care;
- Leveraging HIT/HIE to **decrease disparities** in access to health care for vulnerable populations (through HIE/HIT-enabled assignment of primary care providers and timely, coordinated primary care follow-up for safety net patients after hospital discharge); and
- **Connecting** local HIT/HIE to State and Federal HIEs and public health data networks/registries to improve population health (by connecting a regional/state immunization registry to HIE/HIT and improving timely reporting of communicable diseases).

Approach: Our approach is to build on a strong existing HIT/HIE infrastructure and collaborative track record among the County’s health care leaders. A Santa Cruz BeACOn consortium would guide a team of staff and consultants in creating an IT environment that addresses information needs during transitions of care, to allow health information to follow the patient from one or more care settings to others. This enhanced information flow will allow providers to know when and what type of care their patients receive in other settings.

Anticipated Outcomes: The enhanced HIT/HIE solutions will generate better care coordination in three specific areas with both cost and quality implications: enabling medication reconciliation, connecting patients to a medical home, and better coordinating referrals and diagnostic orders/results to primary care and a specific data set to assist in transitions of care.

Products: In addition to documenting progress in meeting specific cost, quality, and population health goals through research and evaluation studies, we will develop a model for HIT/HIE “shared services” that can be replicated elsewhere, as well as a governance model and example of a community-wide practice redesign/quality improvement program. We also expect to engage payers in both participating in and sustaining this work.

Duration: The project will span 3 years, from April 2010 – March 2013, but will be sustained beyond that period.