

HITOC SEEKS MEMBERS FOR CONSUMER ADVISORY PANEL

Applications for first round appointments due September 24

Electronic patient health and medical history records are important components of both federal and state health reform efforts, focusing on enhancing quality of care and containing costs.

The goal of Oregon's Health Information Technology Oversight Council (HITOC) is to facilitate the use of Electronic Health Records (EHR) and the development of a system to enable the exchange of that information (Health Information Exchange or HIE) across Oregon with the consumer at the hub. These capabilities must ensure the privacy and security of each individual's personal health information and allow for the information to be available, when and where it is needed, so that every time a patient sees a doctor, his or her medical history will be easily accessed and up-to-date. The results will be improved health and health care at lower costs. But HITOC members recognize that they need regular input from a range of consumer voices to make the commitment to keeping the consumer at the hub a reality.

Many questions still need to be answered including:

- What policies are needed to ensure consumer confidence in health information exchange?
- What security mechanisms need to be in place to assure consumers that their privacy is maintained?
- How can this new technology be used to help address issues of health disparities?
- How should HITOC and the Oregon Health Authority communicate with consumers about the technology changes happening in provider offices?

We need strong consumer representation on HITOC's Consumer Advisory Panel. Will you help?

The Consumer Advisory Panel will be asked to provide recommendations to HITOC and the Oregon Health Authority on strategic decisions, policy proposals and communication strategies on items relating to health information technology and the exchange of health information impacting consumers.

Interested in more information about applying? Read the back of this flyer and then go to http://www.oregon.gov/OHPPR/HITOC/Phase_1/Workgroups/WG_AP_Announcement.shtml

Have questions? Email HITOC.info@state.or.us or Bob Brown, HITOC member, rebrown47@gmail.com.

Find additional background information on the back of this sheet.

Background:

Over the last ten months the focus of the Health Information Technology Oversight Council (HITOC) has been to develop the strategic and operational plans for health information exchange (HIE) in Oregon. HITOC's goal is to facilitate the development of a system of HIE across Oregon with the consumer at the hub that ensures the privacy of each individual's personal health information, and allows for information, when and where it is needed, to improve health and health care.

HITOC has worked with many stakeholders during the planning process, but as part of the next phase it is essential to have a strong consumer voice at the table to provide strategy input and recommendations to HITOC as policies are being considered. To help facilitate regular input, HITOC has announced the formation of a Consumer Advisory Panel. Applications are now being accepted.

The Consumer Advisory Panel will ensure that conversations about health information exchange in Oregon have a strong patient-centric view. Oregon's HIE vision is to have *"Information, when and where it is needed, to improve health and health care,"* and for consumers to have control over their information through an opt-out consent model.

There is much work to be done to ensure that all consumers in Oregon have the education and opportunity to make informed choices. Starting this fall, HITOC will be working on broad-based outreach and education strategies with both health care providers and consumers. The Consumer Advisory Panel will play a key role in helping determine the best ways to engage consumers. Outreach is a long-term effort that requires a wide-ranging strategy. It must start early and reach both consumers and health care providers, because most conversations about the benefits and risks of health information exchange will occur between providers and their patients. Consumer education must also address how personal health records factor into overall health management and the best ways to use those records in a secure environment to empower consumers and improve their health while maintaining the privacy of the information.

Also, under the auspices of the Oregon Health Authority, any policies that HITOC recommends will take into account that health, economic and social welfare policies in the United States and Oregon have, historically, intentionally or inadvertently disadvantaged communities of color and other under-represented communities. These inequities, well documented by race and ethnicity, are avoidable and unjust. In 2010, the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Health Policy Board acknowledged health equity as a fundamental value. As such, all Oregon Health Policy Board members, committee members (including HITOC) and Oregon Health Authority staff will strive to avoid creating or maintaining health policies that perpetuate or increase avoidable and unjust health inequities. All members and staff acting on behalf of the Oregon Health Policy Board or the Oregon Health Authority will make every effort to proactively evaluate all recommended policy improvements throughout the policy making process to assure they fully promote and resource health equity and the elimination of related inequities.

While broad-scale efforts will be undertaken, health information exchange will also require clear privacy provisions, support for increased health literacy, administrative simplification, specific and dedicated data management tools and greater coordination of care focused on vulnerable and underserved populations.

See other side for specific information on HITOC's Consumer Advisory Panel and how to apply.