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Building an Education Program to Support the Demand for Qualified Health I.T. Professionals

Thomas Gallagher  
*University of Montana - Missoula*

Anne V. Delaney  
*University of Montana - Missoula*

Kari Lynn McLean  
*University of Montana - Missoula*

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Introduction

The rapid adoption of standardized electronic medical records in clinical settings has created a demand for individuals with expertise in clinical health practices and Information Technology. High demand, high wage job opportunities are available for individuals entering the field with these interdisciplinary skills. Faculty members from the Applied Computing & Electronics and Health Professions Departments at UM have partnered with clinicians from regional health facilities and faculty members from the Department of Healthcare Informatics at Montana Tech in designing a cross-curricular program for educating individuals to support IT in clinical settings. This poster session will describe our progress in creating a new program of study and describe our successes and challenges at UM in educating individuals for careers in Health Information Technology.

What is Health IT?

- Devices – ergonomics and information
- Electronic Medical Record (EMR) and Electronic Health Record (EHR)
- Database - Security/Acess/Maintenance
- Patient Care - Safety, Quality, Access
- Healthcare Workers: Physicians, Nurses, Pharmacists, Radiologists, etc.
- Research – improve patient care, patient outcomes, use qualitative data

Benefits of Health IT

- Improve health quality
- Continuity of care across the healthcare continuum
- Prevent medical errors
- Reduce health care costs
- Increase administrative efficiencies
- Decrease paperwork
- Expand access to affordable care.

EMR

Electronic Medical Record

Computerized clinical records created and managed by an individual care delivery organization (CDO). The EMR is an intra-organizational record for one patient. Electronic Medical Records are replacing traditional paper files.

EHR

Electronic Health Record

Computerized clinical records across multiple CDOs and episodes. The EHR is not owned or managed by any one organization but exists as a consortium of information related to one patient. Electronic Medical Records are replacing traditional paper files.

HITECH Act

- GOAL: Improved healthcare delivery and patient care through the use of health information technologies (HIT)2
- Incentive programs for meaningful use and EMR/EHR adoption

HIPAA

- Privacy, Access, & Security
- Administrative, Physical, & Technical Safeguards4

The Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health IT

is the principal Federal entity charged with coordination of nationwide efforts to implement and use the most advanced health information technology and the electronic exchange of health information.

ONC Workforce Roles

(for community college training and education programs)

1. Practice workflow and information management redesign specialist

Workers in this role assist in reorganizing the work of a provider to take full advantage of the features of Health IT in pursuit of meaningful use of health IT to improve health care. Individuals in this role may have backgrounds in health care (for example, as a practice administrator) or in information technology, but are not licensed clinical professionals.

2. Clinician/practitioner consultant

This role is similar to the “redesign specialist” role listed above but brings to bear the background and experience of a licensed clinical and professional or public health professional.

3. Implementation support specialist

Workers in this role provide on-site user support for the period of time before and during implementation of health IT systems in clinical and public health settings. The previous background of workers in this role includes information technology or information management.

4. Implementation manager

Workers in this role maintain systems in clinical and public health settings, including patching and upgrading of software. The previous background of workers in this role includes information technology or information management.

5. Technical/software support staff

Workers in this role maintain systems in clinical and public health settings, including patching and upgrading of software. The previous background of workers in this role includes information technology or information management.

6. Trainer

Workers in this role design and deliver training programs, using adult learning principles, to employees in clinical and public health settings. The previous background of workers in this role includes experience as a health professional or health information management specialist. Experience as a trainer in the classroom is also desired.

Flexible Education and Training

- coursework and internships
- partnership opportunities

Partnerships

- Community Medical Center
- Local Advisory Board
- Office for the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC)
- UM – Department of Applied Computing & Electronics
- UM – Department of Health Professions
- UM - Montana Tech Department of Health Care Informatics

Literature Cited


Figure 1. Categorization of Healthcare Information Systems1

Figure 4. MUS Comparison: Two-Year Health Professions degrees requiring at least one computing course