



Company: Community Choice Healthcare Network
Web Site: www.communitychoice.com
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Healthcare
Partner: CitiusTech
Partner Web Site: www.citiustech.com

Company Profile

Community Choice is a healthcare consortium composed of regional healthcare organizations including five hospitals and 10 clinics with a total of 200+ physician members in North Central Washington. Community Choice is also a management support organization providing assistance in information technology implementation, recruitment of healthcare disciplines, HIPPA compliance training, cultural competency in healthcare, and overall leadership in keeping up with the constantly changing healthcare environment.

Software and Services

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Microsoft® HealthVault™ Powers the Community Choice Health Record Bank in Washington State

“The consumer-managed health record bank model will change healthcare as we know it, facilitating greater participation by consumers in their own care. This project represents an important step in demonstrating a different approach to addressing the key challenges of making comprehensive electronic medical records available at any point of care.”

Jesús Hernández, Executive Director of Community Choice Healthcare Network, Cashmere, WA

Washington State is on the forefront of healthcare information technology, showcasing an innovative model for national information exchange that has the potential to empower consumers, reduce healthcare risks and costs. The Community Choice Healthcare Network, a healthcare consortium in North Central Washington, is undertaking a pilot health record bank project as a feasibility study to demonstrate the value of a statewide health record bank network. This pilot is one of the first patient-controlled health record banks (HRB) in the United States.


Situation

The Community Choice Healthcare Network, a consortium of regional healthcare organizations in North Central Washington state, has experienced significant adoption of electronic medical records, increased broadband connectivity and large investments in telemedicine projects and patient health information exchanges between distinctly different healthcare institutions in the region.

“While a growing number of our health care providers are using electronic

medical records and sharing data, we have a very small number of patients that have ready access to their personal health information in an electronic format – let alone in a way that can be proactively used with their doctor,” said Jesus Hernandez, executive director of Community Choice Health Network.

As healthcare transitions from paper-based to electronic records, there is a significant opportunity to develop models for more efficient sharing of health information. However, health information is largely possessed and controlled by the



physicians who provide care and the organizations such as insurance companies that pay for care. Federal and state laws provide the right for consumers to obtain paper copies of their records. However, getting them can be challenging and time consuming.

Most information sharing exchanges focus on information exchange among providers for treatment purposes, leaving consumers on their own in gathering their own data.

“Provider to provider exchange is inefficient when there are multiple sources. It will be much better to have the essential data collated in one place,” says William Gotthold MD, Informatics doctor at Wenatchee Valley Medical Center.

“What is often missing is data portability,” continues Hernandez. “Consumers lack a crucial tool for taking an active role in their care. If a patient wants their health information, they need to go to every place where they’ve had medical treatment and get it on their own.”

While technologies like personal health records (PHRs) provide a consumer view of their health data, many PHRs are still tethered to the institution offering the PHR, thus providing limited ability to collect aggregated information from multiple clinicians and limited portability of data should the patient leave the institution.

Solution

In early 2009, consumers serviced by the Community Choice Healthcare Network had the opportunity to organize and manage access to their own health information with a health record bank pilot project.

The pilot health record bank leverages Microsoft® HealthVault™, a Web-based personal health platform. Extensive program management was provided by CitiusTech, a specialist provider of healthcare consulting and technology services.

The current phase of the pilot is focused on determining the viability of the community health record bank model and on testing if consumers will use it and share their health information with providers, family members and others involved in their care.

A future direction for the HRB is for the management of chronic conditions. “Chronic disease management is a priority for us,” says Hernandez. “What impressed us about HealthVault is the device connectivity and partner ecosystem that we can leverage later for remote monitoring programs.”

Medical Records You Can Bank On

A health record bank (HRB) is an emerging healthcare model which provides a secure and protected place to deposit consumer health information electronically from multiple sources and, with the patient’s permission, accessed by physicians in the course of providing care.

Participants can currently receive four types of “high value” data into their health record banks: medication history, immunization records, allergies and problem lists.

How it Works

Consumers registering for the HRB create a HealthVault account. Data coming from multiple physician practices and hospital medical record systems is brought into HealthVault, and then shared, with the patient’s permission with physicians. Consumers have the ability to choose which providers can “deposit” information into their accounts.

“HealthVault provides a single interface to diverse sources of data so patients have a unified view of their data,” says Manish Sharma, Business Manager – Consumer Health at CitiusTech. “It also acts as the consumer’s information repository that they use to store, manage and share data, expanding

consumer control over their own health information.”

Benefits

While the final study is not completed, anecdotal feedback indicates that patients are leveraging their HRB and physicians appreciate the ability to view patient data. The pilot is also producing valuable information about cultural, legal and technology issues surrounding this model of care.

The nation is watching the progression of this pilot, with some believing that health record banks can be the foundation for health information exchange.

“Eventually, these patient-controlled electronic medical histories could become hubs at the center of a national health information network that seamlessly connects not just doctors and patients, but also hospitals, pharmacies, labs, and health insurance companies,” says Hernandez.

About Microsoft

Our vision is to improve health around the world through software innovation.

Over the past 12 years Microsoft has steadily increased its investments in health, with a focus on addressing the challenges of health providers, health and social service organizations, payers, consumers and life science companies, worldwide.

Microsoft closely collaborates with a broad ecosystem of partners and develops its own health solutions, such as HealthVault. Together, Microsoft and its industry partners are working to advance a vision of unifying health information and making it more readily available, ensuring the best quality of life and affordable care for everyone.

For more information about HealthVault, visit: www.HealthVault.com.