

The Tennessee Health e-Share Direct Project ***New Program Brings Secure Exchange of Patient Information to Memphis Healthcare Providers***

As Tennessee's healthcare system evolves, physicians continue to seek ways to improve how medical services are coordinated and delivered to patients. Through new technology, there is an unprecedented opportunity for healthcare providers to collaborate and expand their efforts to improve preventive care, better manage chronic conditions and coordinate more community-based care options for older patients.

Historically providers have had limited options for using technology to achieve these goals because easy-to-access, simple-to-use and secure electronic communications of patient information across providers were unavailable. Today, with the help of improved information technology, Memphis healthcare providers can be among the first in Tennessee to deliver better care and improved outcomes for patients through the "Tennessee Health e-Share Direct Project."

The Health eShare Direct Project provides a simple way for healthcare professionals to send authenticated, encrypted health information directly to known, trusted recipients over the Internet. Direct Technology is being implemented nationwide and is currently being piloted in Tennessee among providers in Memphis, Chattanooga and Hickman County.

How does the Direct Technology work?

All healthcare professionals can relate to how inefficient the exchange of patient information among providers can be. Direct Technology is an e-mail-like direct messaging service that allows providers to securely send and receive messages and attachments. It can streamline the typical communication barriers that once existed and improve care coordination by allowing a physician to securely push out patient information, such as lab results, to all appropriate members of a patient's care team who have a Direct address. This could include specialists such as oncologists or neurologists, or home health providers and therapists.

The more providers who participate in the Health eShare Direct Project and use Direct Technology, the stronger our continuum of care and healthcare system becomes.

What are the benefits of Direct?

Direct improves collaboration and communication among healthcare providers. It makes vital information more readily accessible and helps providers deliver more efficient and effective care. Direct Technology can:

- Enable clinical information to track the patient throughout the healthcare system;
- Allow physicians and their staffs to securely transfer medical summaries, diagnostic test results and other patient information;
- Streamline transitions of care by providing timely discharge summary information and referral information;
- Enhance the process of treatment authorizations for non-physician providers such as home health providers, long-term care providers and therapists; and
- Simplify reporting requirements to Medicare and other payers.

Direct also helps providers meet Meaningful Use Stage 2 requirements. Starting in 2014, providers will need to demonstrate to the federal government that they are effectively using electronic health records and securely sharing patients' health information with other providers. Direct Technology satisfies these requirements by allowing doctors access to various healthcare data sources and offering data exchange at transitions of care.

Are there any financial incentives associated with enrolling in the Health eShare Direct Project?

Yes. In addition to Medicare and Medicaid incentives associated with meeting Meaningful Use requirements, the Tennessee Office of eHealth Initiatives is offering a one-time incentive of \$500 per participant. The Health eShare Direct Technology Project program requires that participants applying for incentives must:

- Register for the program by filling out the mini-registration at www.HealthshareTN.org.
- Utilize a Direct TechnologyTrust.org accredited solution. The list of state-endorsed vendors is available www.directtrust.org/accreditation-status/
- Demonstrate active use of Direct address to transmit information by sending one non-test Direct message for each user account (during the pilot phase/within 30 days of establishing the Direct account)
- Comply with existing security and HIPAA regulations.

Licensed healthcare practitioners also must verify and retain documentation of good standing.

How do I and my team enroll in the Health eShare Direct Project?

Providers may sign up at www.HealthshareTN.org or call 866-514-8595.

The Tennessee Health eShare Direct Project is being implemented and supported by Qsource, a Tennessee-based nonprofit healthcare quality improvement and information technology company working in cooperation with the Tennessee Office of eHealth Initiatives. This initiative received grant funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to support the Direct Project and other projects to implement secure health information exchange. Through these stimulus funds, ARRA enables Tennessee the opportunity to advance the secure exchange of health information and to expand the adoption and Meaningful Use of EHRs and HIE. For more information, please visit <http://www.tn.gov/ehealth/>.