



Intel Drives National Discussion on IT Infrastructure for ACOs

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At the February 2011 Health Information Management Systems Society's Annual Conference & Exhibition (HIMSS11), Intel hosted an executive breakfast featuring

a panel discussion on the rise of accountable care organizations (ACOs) and their impact on healthcare IT. The global technology company convened Anesh Chopra, the nation's first CTO, Kaiser Permanente's CMIO and other prominent healthcare provider leaders to commence a national dialogue on the IT infrastructure required to support accountable care.

While healthcare communities around the country have been piloting ACO-like models in the last few years, the concept of ACOs has been launched into the national spotlight, thanks to the Patient Protection and Affordability Care Act (ACA) of 2010. Under ACA, this emerging payment and delivery reform model is authorized to participate – and thus has a significant opportunity to expand and thrive – in the Medicare market.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released proposed regulations on ACOs and will begin implementing them through the Medicare Shared Savings Program in January 2012. These regulations incorporate meaningful use of EHRs and health information exchange, which are being supported under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's HITECH Act of 2009, for patient care coordination. The ACO model ties provider reimbursements to quality metrics and reduced total cost of care for an assigned patient population managed by a coordinated team of healthcare providers. The three primary aims of the reform efforts are to provide better care for individuals, improve population health and reduce healthcare costs and expenditures.

Some ACO pilots are reporting early successes, in areas such as high satisfaction levels and avoidable hospital admissions and days. For

the majority of healthcare organizations that have not taken the leap, however, adopting, implementing and sustaining an ACO requires a major commitment of financial and human resources, time, and transparency and trust among stakeholders; a robust IT infrastructure; and cultural and process reengineering. Healthcare organizations will also need to determine how best to incorporate HHS' final regulations for their ACOs.

Understanding the 4Cs Trends

Before taking part in an ACO, healthcare organizations need to assess the current national healthcare ecosystem. In the last decade, Intel's team of social scientists, led by Eric Dishman, Intel Fellow, Director of Health Innovation and Director of Health Policy for Care Innovations, an Intel GE company, has conducted studies around the world and have documented four global trends – termed the "4Cs" – that ACOs or other integrated care delivery models must incorporate in their infrastructure and IT architecture.

The **Complexity** of the healthcare system has grown exponentially, with the adoption of healthcare IT creating more data and data sources, an aging population suffering from

catalyst and incentive for healthcare providers to deliver comprehensive, high-quality care. Finally, as the movement of consumerism takes hold of the industry, consumers will demand a delivery system that focuses on wellness and supports aging in place. This care-anywhere shift will rely on **Community-based care**, which requires medical devices for patients and mobile technology for providers for better management. "ACOs are the primary mechanism for beginning to shift the American healthcare system from a volume-driven to a value-driven paradigm," Dishman said.

Leading the National Discussion on ACOs

Intel has gained prominence as a thought leader in ACOs, with both the Obama Administration and HHS seeking out its expertise and advice. The global technology company has collaborated with healthcare organizations in dozens of countries to strategically develop and implement sustainable ACO business models, and as such, has the national attention to lead discussions on the required components of a sustainable ACO. Foremost on the list is a robust and innovative IT infrastructure.



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multiple chronic illnesses, the incorporation of genomics and phenomics into clinical care and a greater number of healthcare providers involved in a patient's care management. This complexity requires that integrated models of care **Coordinate** communication, information sharing and the workflow of all members of the care team, which requires a robust IT infrastructure for connectivity.

Past reform models have failed largely because reimbursement was not tied to the changes in care delivery. Therefore, **Collective** payment or collective responsibility will be the

At Intel's HIMSS11 executive breakfast on ACOs, Chopra stressed the importance of marketplace innovation in developing new products and services to meet the needs of this new payment and delivery model. To complement and boost the entrepreneurial spirit in the free market, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (the Innovation Center) was established under the ACA to identify and test innovative care and payment models for Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP programs, and help scale up models that prove to be successful. The overall goal of the Innovation Center is to spread models



that promote improved care and better health at reduced costs. “The Innovation Center will allow us, in a data-driven, evidence-based way, to prototype, validate and scale,” Chopra said.

Technology will also be used as a tool to enable this “new social covenant between patient, family members and providers,” according to Dishman, who served as panel moderator. John Mattison, CMIO of Kaiser Permanente, pointed out that consumer-directed applications and online groups and resources will enhance family support around the patient. With projections that half of the U.S. population will be using smartphones by the end of 2011, Michael Young, former CEO of Atlanta-based Grady Health System, noted that having patient information “in your palm” will make a “profound difference” in delivering clinical care.

As part of the care team, family physicians must give patients health management tools that are integrated into their daily activities, said Steve Waldren, director of the American Academy of Family Physicians’ Center for Health IT. Data from disparate IT systems must also be freed up so applications can deliver value beyond the physician’s office. Expect to see the healthcare IT vendor community partnering with physicians to create applications to support and enhance their workflow under ACOs, Chopra said. “There is a billion-dollar new business to be born inventing those products and services. This is a growth industry that also has the double bottom line of empowering the patient and improving care quality,” he said.

Intel: Thought Leader and Innovator

Intel is in a unique position to help drive people-centered innovation required to successfully manage and sustain ACOs. Since 1999, Intel has conducted ethnographic research in healthcare organizations and in homes around the world in order to develop research-based technology to improve care in healthcare organizations, assist in prevention and early intervention, and empower and inform individuals to lead independent lives and take better care of themselves, respectively. Intel and GE formed Care Innovations, a joint-venture partnership,

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to accelerate the development of products, services and technologies for healthy, independent living in the home and assisted-living communities. Its research has also identified and continues to identify new care models and work practices, as well as promote standards and policies that foster innovation and interoperability.

As a global technology supplier, Intel provides the computing foundation to enable healthcare innovation that enhances performance and efficiency, while at the same time reducing IT maintenance costs and securing and ensuring the privacy of patient information. Intel’s partners rely on its technology to build medical equipment and IT systems that improve quality, make information more easily accessible and drive economical efficiencies. With its vendor-neutral approach, Intel’s collaboration with manufacturers, software developers and service providers have resulted in the acceleration of standards development that support interoperability and stability of the greater technology infrastructure and the delivery of solutions across the care continuum.

Specific to ACOs, immediately following

HIMSS11, Intel also conducted an ACO workshop for Grady Health System. Using the health system’s real-world challenges in eight scenarios, workshop participants learned to understand and work through barriers by applying business values and innovation tools and methodologies. The workshop produced a document that will serve as a roadmap for other healthcare organizations to create a sustainable ACO business model.

Intel has identified the components of an IT infrastructure that will allow multiple healthcare organizations to effectively and efficiently coordinate care for a diverse patient population, as well as support the workforce and workflow. Technologies can be leveraged to connect healthcare providers, patients and their caregivers, giving them the means to collaborate on and coordinate treatment plans. With access to patient data via EHRs, for example, healthcare providers get a longitudinal view of their patients. This patient information will enable greater clinical decision support. Technology will also be called upon to support community-based care, such as real-time feedback on drug and behavior therapies, which further empowers patients.

The global technology company founded the Accountable Care Community of Practice, which comprises members representing healthcare IT vendors, to cooperatively and collaboratively ensure that the healthcare IT infrastructure required by providers to implement this new care model is delivered to the market rapidly, effectively and efficiently. One of the Accountable Care CoP’s goals is to develop an accountable care IT resources toolkit, which will include educational materials, best practices and technology blueprints.

Today, healthcare organizations have a real opportunity to transform the way care is delivered. The key lies in creating a strategic roadmap that incorporates workforce and workflow re-engineering and leverages healthcare IT to enable those changes. With Intel’s depth and breadth of experience, healthcare communities will be able to achieve true accountable care with greater speed and efficiency. •

About Intel

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Go to www.healthcareitnews.com/intel-video-seminar to view "*The 4Cs of Global Healthcare Reform*" presented by Eric Dishman.



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