**Week 9: HIT Policy**

Legislative efforts in health care often build on one another. The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) of 2009 is a prime example of how one piece of legislation further clarifies a previous one. HITECH enhances many of the security and privacy provisions of the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). However, privacy and security are not the only concerns of health information technology policy. HITECH incentivizes the adoption of electronic health record systems and outlines standards for meaningful use. Though laws like HITECH and HIPAA are on the books, to what extent do they actually impact the quality of patient care?

This week you focus on the impact of the HITECH legislation and consider how the incentives and meaningful use criteria impact health care.

**Learning Objectives**

**Students will:**

* Evaluate the impact of the HITECH legislation on improving the quality of patient care
* Analyze how incentives influence the use of health information technology

**Learning Resources**

**Note:** To access this week’s required library resources, please click on the link to the Course Readings List, found in the Course Materials section of your Syllabus.

**Required Readings**

McGonigle, D., & Mastrian, K. G. (2018). *Nursing informatics and the foundation of knowledge* (4th ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett Learning.

* Chapter 8, “Legislative Aspects of Nursing Informatics: HITECH and HIPAA”  
    
  This chapter explores two pieces of legislation that dramatically impact nursing informatics: the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of 2009 and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

Arlotto, P. (2010). 7 strategies for improving HITECH readiness. *hfm(Healthcare Financial Management)*, *64*(11), 90–96.

Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

This article reviews seven strategies to help prepare for the implementation of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH). The central point of the article focuses on demonstrating meaningful use of electronic health records.

Begum, R., Smith Ryan, M., Winther, C. H., Wang, J. J., Bardach, N. S., Parsons, A. H., & … Adams Dudley, R. (2013). Small Practices’ Experience With EHR, Quality Measurement, and Incentives. *American Journal Of Managed Care, 19e*SP12–8.

This article presents a study of clinician’s attitudes toward the use of financial incentives for the implementation of electronic health records in small practices.

Brown, B. (2010). The final rules for meaningful use of EHRs. *Journal of Health Care Compliance, 12*(5), 49–50.

Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

In this article, the author poses four questions pertaining to the EHR system in the United States. In particular, the article examines Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments and the ways the meaningful use of certified EHRs will be verified.

Classen, D. C., & Bates, D. W. (2011). Finding the meaning in meaningful use. *New England Journal of Medicine, 365*(9), 855–858.

Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

This article details the challenges of meeting the meaningful use standards in order to receive the benefits legislated under the HITECH Act. The authors specify the requisites for achieving benefits with EHRs, the relationship between meaningful use and commercial EHRs, and the tools needed to evaluate EHRs after implementation.

Kempfert, A. E., & Reed, B. D. (2011). Health care reform in the United States: HITECH Act and HIPAA privacy, security, and enforcement Issues. *FDCC Quarterly, 61*(3), 240–273.

Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

The authors of this article examine HITECH, in addition to the impact of the privacy rules under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The article details the potential negative repercussions of failing to comply with HIPAA and HITECH.

Murphy, J. (2010b). Nursing informatics. The journey to meaningful use of electronic health records. *Nursing Economic$, 28*(4), 283–286.

Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

This article reviews HITECH and the background leading up to its passage. The author also details the financial incentives intended to assist health care providers in purchasing and implementing HIT and EHR systems.

**Optional Resources**

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2011). *Health IT home*. Retrieved from http://www.healthit.gov/

[U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2012). *Regulations and guidance*. Retrieved from http://www.healthit.gov/policy-researchers-implementers/health-it-rules-regulations](about:blank)

**Discussion: HITECH Legislation**

In order for organizations to receive the incentives offered through the HITECH legislation, they must be able to demonstrate that they are using the technology in meaningful ways. The following criteria for meaningful use must be evident to qualify for EHR incentives (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2012). The technology must:

* Improve quality, safety, and efficiency, and reduce health disparities
* Engage patients and families
* Improve care coordination
* Improve population and public health
* Ensure adequate privacy and security protections for personal health information

For this Discussion you consider the impact of the meaningful use criteria of the HITECH legislation on the adoption of health information technology.

**To prepare:**

* Review the Learning Resources on the HITECH legislation and its primary goals.
* Reflect on the positive and negative impact this legislation has had on your organization or one with which you are familiar.
* Consider the incentives to encourage the use of EHRs. Focus on the definition of meaningful use and how it is measured.
* Reflect on how the incentives and meaningful use impact the quality of patient care.
* Find an article in the Walden Library dealing with one of the criteria to qualify for meaningful use and how it has been successfully met.

**By Day 3**

**Post a description of how HITECH legislation has positively or negatively impacted your organization. Address how its related incentives influence the adoption of health information technology in health care and impact the quality of patient care. Provide a summary of the article you identified and explain how it demonstrates the ability of health information technology to meet the requirements of meaningful us**