

Key Findings from eHealth Initiative Survey on Data and Analytics

Overview

Spurred in part by federal incentives for electronic health record (EHR) adoption under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH), the U.S. healthcare system has become increasingly digitized over the past several years. Health information technology has supported the shift from paper-based, fee-for-service care to a value-based paradigm by collecting and analyzing electronic data. Today, healthcare organizations are using analytics to harness real-time information from a variety of data sources to improve quality, reduce costs, and enable population health management.

Survey Methodology

eHealth Initiative (eHI) collaborated with the College of Health Information Management Executives (CHIME) to conduct a national survey assessing the use of data and analytics across healthcare organizations. Comprised of 16 questions, the survey examined attitudes toward data use, trends in business use cases for data and analytics, the technological solutions employed by organizations, and associated challenges and barriers. The survey was disseminated online to chief information officers and other C-level executives at a variety of healthcare organizations including provider groups, hospitals, health systems, and health information exchange organizations. The survey was fielded over a four-week period from May 30 to June 28, 2013.

Survey Respondent Demographics

In total, 102 organizations responded to the survey, representing an array of stakeholders including hospitals (37%), integrated delivery networks (33%), academic medical centers (13%), multi-provider practices (3%), health information exchange organizations (2%), community health centers or clinics (1%), and others.

Survey Findings

Respondents demonstrated a common understanding of the potential impact and benefits of using data and analytics to help drive organizational decision-making and action. Nearly 80 percent of respondents felt that leveraging big data and predictive analytics is important to their organization's strategic plans and priorities. However, this may not match reality on the ground. Eighty-four percent believe that the application of big data and predictive analytics is a significant challenge for their organization. Only 45 percent of respondents feel that their organization has implemented a flexible and scalable plan to adapt to the growing volume, liquidity, and availability of electronic health data. The survey reveals a wide range of applications and uses of data analytics, including revenue cycle management, resource utilization, fraud and abuse prevention, population health management, and quality improvement.

Other findings from the survey include:



eHEALTH INITIATIVE

Real Solutions. Better Health.

- A large majority (82%) indicated that bi-directional sharing of clinical and/or patient data with local healthcare organizations is important or very important to their organization.
- Nearly 90 percent of respondents use analytics for revenue cycle management. The most common use case was managing accounts receivable metrics (82%), including denial rates, take back rates, claim/payment volumes and outstanding receivables.
- Two-thirds of respondents use analytics to prevent fraud and abuse, and only 26% of respondents viewed the use of analytics for fraud and abuse as a key business area in the coming years. The most common use cases were cost trending/forecasting (38%) and care utilization analysis (35%).
- Although 23% of respondents are not yet using analytics for population health management, 82% of respondents identified population health management as a key analytics business area in the coming years.
- Quality improvement was the most commonly reported use case (90%) for analytics. Inpatient care utilization and outcomes analysis (80%) and adverse event reporting (75%), were among the most widely reported functionalities.
- The two most common data sources were administrative data (77%) and claims-based data (75%). Unstructured textual data (47%) and remote monitoring device/sensor data (31%) will likely rise in prominence in coming years as technology advances and devices become more ubiquitous.
- Only 18 percent of respondents indicated that they have sufficient trained staff to collect, process, and analyze data. Sixteen percent overcome staff shortages by employing third-party organizations such as consultants. Twenty-six percent report that although they have tried hiring more staff for analytics, they have not found sufficiently trained candidates. Thirty-four percent of respondents note that senior leadership had not prioritized analytics as a key area for staffing needs.
- In addition to the lack of appropriately trained staff (64%), other commonly reported barriers to analytics include data ownership and/or governance issues (53%), data integration challenges (40%), and lack of funding (39%).

A webinar sponsored by McKesson will be available online that features a reactionary panel of Chief Information Officers to review and discuss the findings.