

Executive Summary

In the next few years, every American will have an electronic medical record (EMR) that the individual and their healthcare providers can access online. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provides needed incentives to encourage deployment of electronic medical records and to establish technical and other industry standards. The industry is moving forward with plans to digitize, store and share data electronically.

Skilled nurses and Allied Health professionals will play a key role in the future of healthcare, with technology as a key enabler for them to provide safe, evidenced-based, efficient and coordinated care. Healthcare Informatics is the intersection of patient care and information technology and will be an increasingly important to both experienced professionals and new nurses entering the workforce.

As the Institute of Medicine (IOM) has emphasized in its quality reports, utilizing informatics is a core competency required of all health care professions. Yet today much of the workforce lacks the skills they need as professionals to integrate IT seamlessly into their practice. Core informatics competencies are being identified and defined. Now they must be incorporated into education at every level and into daily practice through such means as accreditation standards, clinical practice guidelines and performance appraisals.

Currently, Nursing and Allied Health programs provide some use and exposure to information technology and informatics as part of their curriculum. However, given the rapid changes occurring in healthcare, including adoption of electronic medical records (EMR), graduates will require increased knowledge and experience in this area. As they enter the workforce, their comfort level with both technology itself and informatics concepts will become increasingly essential. This online self-assessment was developed to help educators assess their readiness for infusion of health IT into a particular program, identify specific challenges that could be addressed via some brief follow-up consulting services and to identify some best practices or lessons learned that could be shared across consortium member colleges.

To be finished when the self-assessments & consulting sessions are all done.....

- Very briefly -- logistics and timeframe.....
- Basic Findings.....
- Highest priority recommendations & lessons learned from this project....