

# Health IT: A Rural Provider's Roadmap to Quality

## The Rural Voice in the State and Local Decision- Making Process: Speaking Up for Rural

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# Goals of Discussion

- Discuss what rural means
- Review rural challenges and barriers
- Discuss potential solution approaches
- Brainstorm approaches to becoming involved in HIT initiatives



# What Constitutes Rural?

- In California:
  - 75% of land mass rural with only 11% of population
- In Wyoming:
  - More than 90% of state designated 'frontier'
- In Colorado:
  - 73% of the state designated either 'rural' or 'frontier'
  - 20 rural counties have no hospitals
- In Alaska:
  - 52% of population lives in 'frontier' areas
  - 1.1 people per square mile



# What Constitutes Rural?

- Limited healthcare access options
- Healthcare is 'old fashioned'
- Information is inconsistent
- Public transportation not the norm
- Chronic healthcare conditions abound



# Rural HIT Considerations

- Cultural Barriers
  - Financial Constraints
    - Systemic Barriers
      - Technological Considerations
        - HIT Solutions



# Cultural Barriers

- Fiercely independent
- Desire for local control
- Limited history of collaboration
- Fear of unknown – technology and data
- Resistance to change in workflows



# Financial Constraints

- Cost
  - Hardware/software
  - Implementation time and effort/productivity
  - Sustainability/maintenance/upgrades
- Limited capital sources
- Uncertain return on investment for most constituencies



# Systemic Barriers

- Majority of physician practices are small
- Majority of hospitals under 100 beds
- Relative physician shortage
- Market considerations for HIT vendors
- HIT training and education gap
- Legal and privacy issues
- High out-migration for care



# Technological Considerations

- Low penetration of HIT among community based healthcare providers
- Limited *electronic* capture of health information
- Broadband more limited/expensive
- Provider education around HIT is a key



# Ways and Means

- *What are the necessary conditions for the possibility of success?*
  - Appropriate organizational support
  - Appropriate project planning and management
  - Appropriate technology



# Rural HIT Approaches

- Create an HIT forum:
  - Regular meetings/calls among HIT peers
  - Identify common HIT needs
  - Developing resources to support the identified needs
  - Facilitate collaborations



# Rural HIT Approaches

- Identify HIT supporting groups:
  - State Office of Rural Health
  - Regional Health Information Organization
  - State QIOs
    - Particularly related to Quality Initiatives
  - Associations
    - HIMSS and MGMA local chapter
    - State hospital and medical societies



# Rural HIT Approaches

- Identify HIT collaborative projects:
  - Majority of funding opps for collaboratives
  - National focus on sharing information across organizations
  - Shared resources



# Brainstorming Exercise

- What suggestions does the group have?

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# FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS?

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