Standards, Intents, and Measurable Elements

Information Technology in Health Care

Standard HCT.01.00

Hospital leaders identify a qualified individual to oversee the hospital's health information technology and processes.

Intent of HCT.01.00

Technology systems can be complex and require oversight for successful implementation and coordination with existing processes.

Investment in information technology is an important resource for hospital systems. Technology systems and processes can significantly improve efficiency, patient safety, dissemination of data, and error reduction.

Health information technology includes the following:
- Electronic health records for documentation and information sharing
- Patient portals
- Health information exchange platforms
- Systems for storing, managing, and securing data
- Platforms for communication among health care practitioners for care coordination
- Interfaces with other systems to facilitate patient care and treatment
- Electronic prescribing tools
- Telehealth technology and applications
- Medical billing software

Without proper evaluation and testing, health information technology can pose increased risks to patients. Successful implementation and integration of health information technology systems requires resources and direction from hospital leaders. The leadership team appoints a qualified individual to oversee technological systems and processes. A qualified individual has education, training, and/or experience relevant to the role and responsibilities.

The hospital's information technology systems must be managed effectively and in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The individual who oversees the health information technology systems is responsible for at least the following:
- Recommending space, equipment, technology, and other resources to hospital leaders to support information technology systems in the hospital
- Selecting and testing new technologies/systems
- Conducting risk assessments to assess security risks, prioritize risks, and identify improvements
- Ensuring that staff are educated and trained on technology security, applicable policies, and procedures
- Implementing metrics to assess how technology systems are functioning and impacting hospital operations

When technology systems are implemented, it is important for the hospital to establish a process to evaluate their usability and effectiveness. Evaluation includes the following:
- Whether or not the technology is being used as designed and intended
- How well the technology integrates with existing technologies
- What effects technology has on improving patient safety, reducing errors, and enhancing performance
- What effect technology has on staff (for example, increasing efficiency, increasing or reducing stress and burnout)

Depending on the size and scope of the hospital, there may be several individuals who support the point person to manage aspects of the program. This individual may also have responsibilities with the health information systems.

All or part of integrating new and existing health information technology may be done through contracted services. Oversight of the contract is provided by the individual who oversees health information technology or health information management.

Measurable Elements of HCT.01.00

1. Hospital leaders provide support and resources for technology services in the hospital.
2. Hospital leaders identify a qualified individual to oversee technological systems and processes. (*See also* GLD.06.00, ME 1)
3. Ⓓ Hospital leaders and a qualified individual(s) participate in processes such as selection, testing, implementation, and evaluation of new and evolving health information technology systems.
4. New and evolving health information technology systems are monitored and evaluated for usability, effectiveness, intended use by staff, and patient safety, and improvements are identified and implemented based on results.

Standard HCT.01.01

When patient data and information are sent electronically, via mobile devices or other forms of electronic communication, the hospital implements processes to ensure quality of patient care, compliance with local laws and regulations, and maintenance of security and confidentiality of patient information.

Intent of HCT.01.01

Time-sensitive data sent electronically may not be viewed by the physician in a timely manner and delay immediate actions that may be needed. The information may be secured on the physician or hospital side, but the patient may not have the same securities in place.

As technology has evolved, many health care practitioners have begun to use electronic forms of communication to do the following:
• Communicate patient data and information through text messages and e-mails (critical results, referrals, and notes).
• Exchange communications with other practitioners.
• Receive text messages or e-mails from patients.

These electronic forms of communication may include mobile devices, e-mail, and secure messaging platforms.

Hospitals may provide mobile or portable devices to their health care practitioners or may allow practitioners to use their personal devices. When mobile or portable devices are used, the hospital needs to ensure that patient data and information are kept secure and confidential, in accordance with laws and regulations and hospital policy. When these devices are provided to staff by the hospital, there are procedures to retrieve the devices when staff are no longer employed by or associated with the hospital.

When the hospital allows confidential and private patient information to be transmitted through text messaging (for example, patient identification, diagnoses, history, test results, other confidential information), the hospital ensures that a formal, secure messaging platform is implemented and includes the following:
• Secure, encrypted sign-on processes for authentication of users (password protected, unique to each user, and end-to-end encrypted for all contents)