**Who We Are**

**Mark Elson, PhD*,* Principal**

Mark provides leadership for health IT initiatives enabling coordinated and high-quality care, focusing on the intersection of business, policy, and technology in a variety of health care settings. Prior to founding Intrepid Ascent in January of 2014, he played a lead role in California’s implementation of federal HITECH Act programs to advance health information exchange and the Meaningful Use of electronic health records. In 2013, he directed CalHIPSO’s Regional Extension Center program, managing ten local affiliates and over fifty consulting organizations assisting 6,000+ providers in qualifying for Meaningful Use. He joined CalHIPSO from UC Davis Health System and Cal eConnect, where he developed and managed programs with a budget of over $8 million supporting health information exchange initiatives across the state. In these and prior roles at RAND, UCLA, and Lumetra, Mark managed teams focused on health care integration through information technology, data analytics, quality improvement, and strategic partnerships. Raised in rural California, Mark is dedicated to supporting providers’ delivery of high-quality care to all. He received a BA from Stanford University and a PhD from the University of Chicago.

**Personal intrepid ascents:**Mark recently attempted Mt. Whitney via the mountaineering route until his party was turned back near the peak by a snowstorm with very high winds. He made up for it in the Berkeley Half Marathon a few weeks later!

**Alex Horowitz, Principal Technology Strategist**

Alex has over nine years of experience as a health care technical executive and systems architect. He served the East Kern County Integrated Technology Association (EKCITA) HIE as its inaugural Chief Architect and Technology Officer from 2007 to early 2013. In this capacity, Alex implemented a sophisticated HIE infrastructure that included population health data analytics capabilities and participated in early-stage national interoperability projects such as NwHIN (now known as eHealth Exchange) and early Direct Project demonstrations. Alex also led a pioneering HIE-Personal Health Record integration pilot through its development and testing stages in 2008. Alex has served as a technical policy consultant to multiple other HIE development efforts, including the State of North Carolina.

Alex most recently served as CalHIPSO’s Director of Technology Services, providing technical guidance on EHR and Meaningful Use related issues to partnering service organizations, providers, and stakeholders with a particular focus on the complex IT needs of FQHCs and other community clinic organizations. He concentrated on addressing health IT policy shifts such as new Meaningful Use data exchange criteria introduced in Stage 2, and supported partners such as the California Department of Public Health in streamlining their participation in California’s health IT ecosystem. Alex was raised in rural California and received a BA from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Personal intrepid ascents:** Alex plans to climb Denali (Mt. Mckinley) by 2020. In preparation, he’s doing numerous ascents on the West Coast. Look for him on a mountain near you!

**Affiliated Team Members**

**Barbara Filkins, CISSP** specializes in system engineering and integration with an emphasis in privacy and security, covering all aspects of the system life cycle. She is experienced with analyzing requirements, developing architectures and identifying tradeoffs, assessing potential and actual system performance, and developing approaches for governance, program management, execution, and support. Since 1994, she has focused on healhcare systems, including strategic planning, data governance, networking, security, system integration, support, operations planning, and the harmonization of privacy and security at all levels from end-user outreach and education to effective integration for information system users. Barbara began her work in health care with the global Military Health Systems. Her expertise in health information exchange (HIE) includes a lead role in the network and security design for the Government Computerized Patient Record, the initial effort to establish interoperability between the DoD and VA EHRs. She led development of the operational plan for the Oklahoma HIE, which is specific to the Oklahoma Medicaid enterprise and beneficiaries but with eventual expansion to the Statewide HIE initiative. Her background includes policy development for technology projects, having written the initial patient-provider policy for use of secure messaging for Tricare On-Line.

Within California, Barbara has been active at the County and State levels since 2000. Projects have included selection and implementation of EHR systems in behavioral health for several agencies (County and private), instantiation of a regional HIE covering the Central Coast, setting governance policy for exchange services, and a lead role in the design, development, and testing of the Immunization Gateway Services operated by the State Department of Public Health. She also contributed significantly to the State’s Operational HIE Plan in the area of patient engagement and sustainability. Ms. Filkins holds a BS from Harvey Mudd College.

**Dawniela Hightower** has over 15 years-experience managing communications, outreach and education projects in the healthcare and education sectors. With a focus in healthcare technology, Dawniela has provided oversight and project management on public relations projects, developed communication and education programs to support technology initiatives, and has served as a training and workflow consultant on software implementations. In 2011, Dawniela worked with CalHIPSO to oversee the statewide outreach of the Regional Extension Center program. There, Dawniela developed outreach programs to enroll more than 6,000 providers in the EHR Incentive program and developed education and awareness programs to train providers on the adoption of electronic health records and the requirements of Meaningful Use. Dawniela has continued work in healthcare education and project management with Eceptionist, Inc. providing training and communication leadership on technology implementations for large health systems and governmental departments implementing telehealth and referral management solutions in the US, Canada, UK and Australia. Dawniela has a BS in business marketing from Sonoma State University.

**Wendy Jameson,** MPP, MPH, is an independent consultant and recognized leader in health care delivery system transformation and quality improvement. Ms. Jameson has 25 years of experience in the organizational systems, behavioral and data analytics aspects of change management and performance improvement. As founding Executive Director of the California Health Care Safety Net Institute (SNI), she grew the organization’s budget to reach $3.2 million, and engaged public hospital system leaders to dramatically improve primary care quality, ensuring its centrality within county health systems. While at SNI, she co-drafted the performance improvement section of the Delivery System Reform Incentive Program, a $3.3 billion public hospital system pay-for-performance program and the centerpiece of California's 2010-2015 1115 Medicaid Waiver. More recently Ms. Jameson served as Director of Quality Improvement for OLE Health, the only FQHC in Napa, CA. Under her leadership, OLE Health achieved PCMH Level 3, doubled pay-for-performance revenues, implemented population health initiatives, earned HRSA recognition and special funding as a top performing health center, and created an interactive, real-time clinical operational dashboard.

**Talia Salzman, MPH**, Health Technology Consultant, specializes in healthcare program development, implementation, and evaluation. Prior to joining Intrepid Ascent in 2015, Talia served as the Community Health Program Specialist at El Camino Hospital. In this capacity, Talia developed and implemented a diabetes program intended to lower the incidence and severity of Type 2 diabetes among low-income populations in Santa Clara County. She hired and supervised a program coordinator and clinical operations contractors, developed screening guidelines, and trained personnel at the three participating nonprofit service agencies. In addition, she established a revenue enhancement program for the hospital to increase the number of insured patients by improving the patient admission process and increasing Medi-Cal coverage. Talia has also held positions with the California Department of Public Health and policy nonprofits in Illinois. She was raised in the Bay Area and holds a BA in Psychology from the University of British Columbia and a Masters in Public Health with a focus in Community Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**John Weir** has over 18 years of senior management experience in healthcare technology and client services. As a technology solution provider, he has deep experience in working with healthcare organizations and clinicians to enable the use of technology for quality improvement initiatives and the enhancement of care outcomes. He is skilled at developing large-scale programs and new service lines for both private and government clients, demonstrating improvements with large-scale clinical data integration and population health management for hospitals and physician organizations. His accomplishments include program management at a state and national level, such as management of an Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) CMMI grant with 15 healthcare organizations across the United States to focus on meeting Triple Aim goals by leveraging healthcare data analytics to improve care coordination and population health management. He also led the national rollout of an EHR adoption program for primary care physicians, under funding by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), called DOQ-IT. As a client services executive he has led implementation and account management teams for organizations including Phytel Inc., Allscripts, and Lumetra Healthcare Solutions, driving new business and high levels of client satisfaction. As a business leader, he provides strategy development, business planning, and project execution for organizations and is adept at influencing multi-stakeholder groups to ensure team harmonization and delivery of commitments within tight budgets and aggressive deadlines.