COMP 301R – Fall 2018 – Speaker Paper

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Title of Presentation: Driving Better Healthcare Through Interoperability

Speaker Name: Teresa Rivera

Introduction

Teresa Rivera has 40 years of experience in the healthcare arena. She is on the board of directors for UHIN, the Utah health information network, and stated that she is responsible for their financial viability. She has a deep understanding of client relations, and she is the one that reaches out to the community and has meetings with decision makers in other branches of healthcare to set up meaningful relationships.

Summary

The main points that I got out of this lecture were: It is the mission of UHIN to improve the quality of healthcare for the patient, and reduce the cost for all parties involved. This is done by making health records more easily accessible to healthcare providers and the patients, as well as putting it into a format that the majority of potential users can utilize efficiently.

Reflection

Teresa mentioned a battle that has been going on in the world of healthcare, and that is that in the old mindset, the hospitals and doctors were very territorial about the medical records of their patients. They thought they owned that information, when in fact, the patient should own them and have the permission and ability to access to their own personal medical records at all times. Some healthcare providers continue to think this way, but it is starting to die out. Information sharing organizations like UHIN have been growing in popularity partially due to their ability to manage both sides and show the pros to sharing that information. One reason why medical records are sometimes hard to share between hospitals is that they may have different procedures or semantics. One hospital might use abbreviations that aren't universal to other healthcare professionals, or their record keeping could be set up differently. UHIN does their best to work with as many people as possible to find the middle ground. Their records are currently shared between billing services, payers or insurance providers, Accountable care organizations (ACOs), healthcare providers, patients, and other health information exchanges.

By sharing medical records and making them more easily accessible, it potentially raises the quality of care given to the patient. With this, there are less chances that a patient will have to undergo the same testing procedures more than once. It also rounds up all of the patient's medical records, so the hospital can treat the patient as a whole instead of focusing on the one body part that is hurting in the moment. By having access to all of the information, a hospital can see other underlying issues and treat them as well. One way that UHIN accomplishes this is through apps. They work with several app providers that allow the user to log in and find the needed information. These apps also allow the user to set up alerts. These alerts solve many issues including lowering costs, lowering chance for readmission, getting the right data pushed at

the right time, medication timers, and fall-risk management. Parents that have a child with a serious medical condition will often plan their vacation routes and destinations based on the proximity to a hospital that offers the specific types of care they may need in case of an emergency. These apps make it easier to identify and locate these service providers. Teresa stated, "People should be able to choose their app or system, and our goal is for every system to have access to the information and make it usable."

Teresa spoke about lowering costs, and that a huge issue for a hospital is when a patient doesn't show up for their appointment. In the immigrant/refugee communities, their is often a lack of communication, or a difficult transportation situation which results in them missing appointments. Some hospitals have found that they lose so much money when these people don't show up, that they have started scheduling Uber rides for the patients. The patients haven't had to worry about the cost, because it gets covered by the hospital or the insurance. This is one way that technology is working towards improving healthcare. By connecting the hospitals, insurance providers, apps, and patients in a more complete way, everyone comes out of it as a winner.

Conclusion

I found it interesting that hospitals are so territorial about their patients' information. I agree that, by making it more accessible to other service providers, it should significantly raise the quality of care given across the board. UHIN is providing a great service, and their goals are all geared towards making everyone's life better.