Division of Services Improvement, Clinical Technical Assistance Project
Technology-Assisted Care
The Centers, Inc.
Call Summary
June 3, 2014 • 2:00 pm ET

Submitted to: Alma Rosario, J.D. McFarland, and Kate Wetherby
Date of Submission: June 4, 2014

Attendees

The Centers, Inc.: Alma Rosario and J.D. McFarland
JBS International (JBS): Dave Wanser, Iris Chai, and Leslie McElligott
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Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the call was to discuss The Centers' technical assistance request (TA 4085). The TA (as it was submitted on May 20, 2014) identifies the following issue and solution:

Issue:

The implementation site visit report discussed the importance of developing an Information technology strategic plan. The Centers would like to consult on the best way to develop this plan.

Solution:

The Centers' goal is to develop an agency information technology strategic plan that will assist in the implementation of the TCE-TAC grant.

Information Technology Strategic Planning

- Dave Wanser (JBS) reviewed The Centers' draft information technology plan to support infrastructure improvements. He reported that it will take significant buy-in and financial resources to accomplish the plan in full.

- The Centers' IT plan should be framed as part of a multi-year strategy that involves allocating targeted resources to meet identified needs. To operationalize the plan, The Centers must identify several factors associated with implementing change: (i) who is responsible, (ii) how will it be executed, (iii) what are the costs, and (iv) what is the timeline?

- Dave emphasized that in addition to sophisticated IT support to manage change, an IT strategic plan involves policy, clinical, and financial considerations to account for how the organization will address (i) the changes required under the Affordable Care Act, (ii) the implementation of quality metrics, and (iii) technology's return on investment.

- Dave stressed that leadership needs to view technology adoption as a priority issue that impacts the entire organization. The organization's former executive director was supportive of expanding technology. The current executive director has primarily been focused on addressing the organization's financial challenges.

- J.D. McFarland (The Centers) has formed a Management Information Systems (MIS) committee that includes representation from the highest levels of executive leadership. The committee is charged with developing a fully adapted plan that offers a pathway to achieve organizational goals.

EHR Considerations

- The Centers has considered implementing other electronic health record (EHR) systems, but will likely remain with Pro-Filer. Their recently updated platform is a vast improvement over the older version. Certification for Stage 2 Meaningful Use requirements was delayed for several months, but should now be in place. It would be beneficial for The Centers to follow up with the EHR vendor to determine that the certification process is complete.

- Dave recommended that The Centers review the contract with their EHR vendor to ensure that the vendor delivers the product they promised. Before signing off on any products, The Centers should develop a script to test the functionality of the platform to make sure it can support different actions.

- At a minimum, systems should be aligned with a Continuity of Care Document and state block grant reporting requirements. J.D. noted that he has not identified an EHR that can handle state reporting requirements. Developing their own solution to address this is a complex feature since reporting requirements will likely continue to change over time (compounded by poor communication and inconsistencies at the state level).

- State provider associations do not have HIT on their radar to the extent that they should. Forming a consortium to address HIT with the state could spur progress.

Next Step

- JBS will provide a template (attached) that was created to help SAMHSA-funded cohort 5 Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) grantees address the use of health information technology as part of their integrated care approach. The template includes background information on health reform and questions to help generate the framework for strategic planning. All organizations will need to make the changes outlined in the template to become viable in the evolving healthcare landscape. Dave requested that The Centers' MIS team review the document carefully and let JBS know if it provides the direction The Centers is seeking.

- The Centers will review the strategic planning document supplied by JBS and consider a structured formal process for leadership to begin addressing the framework for a strategic planning process.

- JBS will follow up with The Centers to determine if the template is meeting their planning needs and if additional technical assistance is necessary.

- J.D. said that it might be helpful to have external motivation/perspective to prompt change. JBS can help to facilitate a conversation with leadership about implementing a plan, if necessary.

- J.D. will confirm the status of Stage 2 Meaningful Use certification with the EHR vendor.