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PHE200 Week 10 Essay

Why are Electronic Medical Records and Health Information Technology in the Affordable Care Act? How will your major improve outcomes and the quality and affordability of Health Care?

HIM majors are extremely important in improving public health outcomes and the quality & affordability of functional healthcare. Visionary leaders in medical informatics have been making the case for EHR for decades. A combination of several negative factors set in motion economic and political forces that have led to the transformation of our medical records system: *health safety, health costs, and changes in society*. First the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) introduced the mandatory use of a certified Electronic Health Records (EHR) for all physicians and facilities as of October 1, 2015; President Obama succeeded in persuading Congress to pass a law intended to ensure that all Americans will be covered by affordable insurance; Public health has a role in monitoring and ensuring the quality of medical care through licensing of physicians, nurses, and other health professionals. Accurate data collection and analysis of protected health information (PHI) is necessary in order fulfill the country's focus on preventive care, affordable access to medical care, and the need for better health care technology. Although most Americans have private health insurance provided through their employers, the need for interoperable electronic medical information has now become a public health concern. The urgent public health need to control the spread of communicable diseases has led to the demand for Internet-based involvement in providing medical care. The Internet is one of the key technologies impacting our society in general. It has also influenced changes in healthcare.

HIM majors will improve the outcomes and quality of healthcare safety with the use of EHRs, as well as investing in the advancements of healthcare technology. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) published a report that stated the following, "healthcare in the U.S. is not as safe as it could be and can be. As many as 98,000 people die in hospitals each year as a result of medical errors that could have been prevented". In addition to the cost of human lives preventable medical errors have been estimated to result in total costs of between \$17 billion and \$29 billion per year in hospitals nationwide. Errors are also costly on the legal court system with millions of dollars in malpractice claims and lawsuits continue to diminish the trust and satisfaction of Americans. Under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), EHR incentive programs, eligible health care providers must adopt and meaningfully use a "certified EHR". The national adoption of EHRs will change the way patients receive medical care. The advancements in EHR system improve data management, timeliness of up-to-date records, which enables clinicians to achieve point-of-care documentation in real time.

HIM majors will also improve the outcomes and quality of healthcare costs by providing affordable health insurance options and expanding Medicaid availability. In 2010, President Obama persuaded Congress to pass a healthcare reform law, aimed at addressing many of the problems with the American medical care system. One of the key components of the new law is the individual mandate, a requirement that all Americans have health insurance or pay a fine. The law also included a requirement to expand Medicaid, which had different eligibility rules in different states, to cover low-income adults. The EHR offers many technology-based features such as CPOE, speech therapy, and clinical decision support services. When doctors and hospitals use health information technology (IT), patients get better care and we all save money. These steps will make it easier for doctors and other health professionals to receive a return on investment for using health IT that were made available under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act. At the same time, the Administration continues to take steps to ensure health data remains private, confidential and secure.

Lastly, HIM majors will improve the outcomes and quality of healthcare by keeping up with the electronic changes in society, and the demand for Internet-based medical care. Changes in the way we live have made paper medical records outdated. In an increasingly mobile society, patients relocate and change doctors more frequently, therefore needing to transfer their records electronically. The Internet is one of the strongest forces for social change in the past decade. Patients are looking towards electronics media for faster methods of communication using email, text messaging and social media websites to stay connected. Many physician practices and 80% of hospitals across America have created interactive websites that actually allow the patient to schedule appointments online, as well as prescription renewals. The introduction of advanced medical software and technology requires trained licensed medical professionals capable of HIPAA compliance. The HIM industry has projected an 18-20% increase of employment opportunities over the next 3-5 years to keep up with this demand.

In conclusion the U.S. medical care system is the most expensive in the world, which has led to rising public health concern. It has many faults; medical care costs have risen continuously, and the rising costs contribute to the inability of many to afford health insurance. I am hopeful that the introduction of EHRs increase safety measures, and adequately trained medical professionals will be cost effective in utilizing the various uses of interoperable, accurate electronic medical records and healthcare technology.

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