

Northwell Health Completes HIE Integration with Healthix

Northwell Health, an NQP hub, has completed integrating its private electronic health information exchange (HIE) to Healthix, the nation's largest HIE. The integration allows for the enhancement of coordinated care and marks a significant step in NQP contributing to the realization of an Integrated Delivery System (DSRIP project 2.a.i) in New York State.

Healthix acts as a central hub of patient information gathered from hospitals, community-based organizations, primary care physicians, behavioral health clinicians, skilled nursing facilities and others. Through the integration, the clinical data of Healthix-consenting patients is available to all Healthix participating organizations and vice versa.

By integrating with Healthix, a provider has access to a comprehensive snapshot of a patient's medical history, which can ultimately prevent duplicative services and reduce the time it takes to share information between practices. All of this goes a long way toward improving the quality of care.

"For instance, if a patient's primary care physician is in Manhattan and they become ill while visiting family in Long Island, the Long Island provider can access that patient's records from the primary care physician—if both providers are connected to Healthix and the patient has consented to the sharing of that information," explains Nathaniel Brown, Northwell Health's DSRIP Information Technology Director. "In the past, the patient's health records would have been locked away in Manhattan, which does no good in an emergency. Healthix ensures that data is shared with the people who need it most, when it's needed most."

Currently, Healthix holds information for more than 16 million residents in New York City and Long Island, and Northwell's team is working to integrate Healthix with dozens of NQP's high-volume Medicaid providers.

Getting the Most Out of Healthix

The Healthix integration process typically takes several months, and the work does not stop with simply connecting practices.

Ani S. Arjune, Project Manager for Physician Network Integration at Northwell Health, is leading a utilization project that begins once a practice is fully connected to Healthix. The goal of this project is to optimize the way providers interact with shared health information data so that they get the most out of their investment in Healthix. This project involves systematically surveying connected practices, analyzing the results, and performing continual process improvement to increase user satisfaction, understanding and utilization.

"In the utilization phase of our Healthix integration process, we're providing in-person, hands-on training at each practice on how to access patient information, send another connected provider a referral, receive notifications and alerts, and make sure their staff is using Healthix to have more productive visits," Arjune says. "The goal is to look at how Healthix is actually being used in practices and then offer ways to increase efficiency and satisfaction with the tool."