

## **CCBH Awardee: Taconic Health Information Network and Community**

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### **Project Purpose and Goals**

The Taconic Health Information Network and Community (THINC) is a multi-stakeholder, community-wide data exchange among community physicians, hospitals, reference laboratories, pharmacies, payers, employers, and consumers.

Clinical, insurance, administrative, and demographic information for more than 600,000 patients is available on a secured Internet infrastructure incorporating standards (HL-7, LOINC, ICD-9/10) for data exchange through THINC. Unique to THINC is the local, ongoing support provided by MedAllies, which provides training and support to community clinicians and their office staff to drive adoption.

With the support of the Foundation for eHealth Initiative, the THINC initiative will complete the current community-wide data exchange in the Hudson Valley region of New York State by obtaining full participation from the remaining community hospitals and reference laboratories. The completion of the data exchange, in conjunction with support and training provided by MedAllies, will drive adoption of the system by community physicians. THINC will also demonstrate a financial model that supports sustainability of the initiative. In addition, THINC will obtain participation of health insurers that will offer financial incentives (pay-for-performance) to community physicians for adoption of additional technology, leading to an Electronic Medical Record (EMR).

### **Project Participants**

The Taconic IPA, a 2,300 independent practice association (IPA), is the lead organization of the THINC initiative. Other stakeholders include: Benedictine Hospital, Kingston Hospital, LabCorp, St. Francis Hospital, and Vassar Brothers Medical Center.

### **Contribution to the Field**

Historically, the Taconic IPA physician organization has successfully broken the organization-centric mentality of competing groups within the healthcare community. Through the THINC project, competing hospitals, reference laboratories and health insurers are coming together to exchange electronic information.

Also, the Taconic IPA organization is actively educating practicing physicians within the community about the capability of information systems, resulting in investment by physicians in systems that not only will benefit their practices, but will also benefit the community by enhancing safety, improving quality, and decreasing cost.

The THINC initiative will provide important lessons regarding strategies for engaging health plans and employers in alignment of incentives around the use of information technology and health information exchange. It will also offer insights and new knowledge regarding innovative methods to support effective implementation of these tools particularly in small physician practices through the experiences of its MedAllies partner.