

Hudson Valley Physician Organization Wins 1.5 Million Dollar Grant to Promote Patient Safety Through Electronic Medical Records

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A regional physician organization in the Hudson Valley of New York state has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant to improve safety, quality and efficiency in healthcare through adoption of information technology. Via a secure Internet portal, local physicians will be able to access electronic medical information, treatment protocols and current clinical research. The 2,500-physician Taconic Independent Practice Association (IPA) will use the Portal with funding from the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Over the past three years, the organization has worked to develop a multi-stakeholder, community-wide medical data exchange among Hudson Valley physicians, hospitals, reference laboratories and health insurers. The data exchange, called Taconic Health Information Network and Community (THINC), allows physicians to electronically manage healthcare data through a clinical messaging system as part of their daily workflow, the first step in adoption of an electronic medical record (EMR). Physicians are able to login to the portal using secure passwords for their offices, from laptop computers and from personal digital assistant devices giving the doctors much more convenient and direct access to patient information while ensuring patient privacy.

"Not only will this grant enhance our efforts to advance the wide-spread use of an electronic medical record (EMR) in the Hudson Valley, but in conjunction with Brigham and Women Hospital in Boston, we will critically evaluate the benefits of these systems to help demonstrate their value for the rest of the country," said A. John Blair III, M.D. CEO of the Taconic IPA.

The Taconic IPA is one of the first physician organizations in the country to attempt deployment of a standard EMR with a community wide electronic data exchange. These types of systems exist in large integrated delivery networks but few exist in community setting with independently practicing physicians.