The Growth of HIE Adoption

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Health IT has evolved dramatically in the last decade, leading to greater access to patient health information and improving the quality, efficiency and safety of health care delivery. Part of this transformation can be attributed to the adoption of health information exchanges (HIE) which have played an integral role in facilitating better care at a lower cost.

The benefits of HIEs are critical for public health advancements. Tens of millions of medical documents are exchanged annually and HIEs allow for increased efficiency by eliminating tedious paperwork, creating a platform for improved reporting and for the efficient deployment of emerging technology and health care services, all while reducing costs.

While HIE adoption has increased significantly overall, the level at which different states are adopting HIEs varies based on a number of factors. A recent study published by the journal *HealthCare* found that some states had 70 percent or better participation, while others showed very minimal participation. Factors associated with these varying levels included market share, hospital size, percentage of Medicaid admissions and whether or not the hospital in question has an established electronic health record (EHR) system.

Additional barriers to HIE implementation include data ownership, patient involvement and the lack of interoperable systems across state and federal agencies. While there has been an uptick in adoption, stronger policies and incentives

may be needed to convince organizations to share their data electronically.

In an effort to drive HIE adoption, several government agencies and outside groups have begun focusing on developing realizable objectives.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials has developed the [Public Health and HIE Toolkit](#), designed to help health departments make better business decisions about HIEs. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), meanwhile, has also developed a [Strategy and Principles to Accelerate HIE](#), which highlights HHS policy goals and ways the agency plans to advance HIEs beyond the current Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. Additionally, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT has released a [10-year roadmap](#) which aims to further leverage HIE adoption in the next three years.

As state governments and health organizations continue to adopt and embrace HIEs, we will all benefit from the increased access and adaptability of technologies that are facilitating our health care systems.

How can we surpass current hurdles to HIE adoption? Tweet @CNSICorp to let us know! Follow CNSI on [Twitter](#).