

## One Approach to a Successful Implementation

from Noel Allender, *Beacon Partners Director of Professional Services*, and  
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### What makes a project implementation *successful*?

Numerous factors - a reasonable timeline, a realistic budget, clear vision and strategy, knowledgeable staff and organization-wide commitment. Each element is critical and collectively form the makings for success.

Let's examine one such successful project. A regional 230-bed medical center in the Midwest with a relatively small IT staff was ready to upgrade an outdated enterprise system that was no longer supported by the vendor.

After a lengthy search and selection process, a vendor was chosen to handle nearly all of the facility's IT needs during a complete multi-phased HIS implementation. The first, and most critical, phase included: Admissions/Registration, Medical Records, Patient Accounting/Billing, Physician, Nursing and Ancillary Order Entry and Results and Laboratory and Radiology systems. Payroll/HR, General Ledger, and Advanced Clinical applications, such as documentation, would follow.

The CFO, CIO, CEO and Chief of Staff were all committed to the project, with the CFO taking the championing position. The vendor planned to use this site to help sell other clients, offering site visits and inspections of the process. This meant many industry eyes would be watching.

The strong project team included current hospital IT staff, vendor specialists, experienced consultants and departmental workflow experts. The workflow experts included the Directors of Admissions, Patient Billing, Medical Records, Nursing and other key ancillaries. To minimize the potential disruption of workflow, these positions were temporarily filled internally so that current operations would not suffer and operational insight and expertise would be fully represented in the new system. Most, if not all, had been with the organization for years and were well-versed in the

operations of their respective departments. Having these resources fully committed 40+ hours per week was the crucial ingredient in the project's success.

Key workflow decision makers were able to work elbow to elbow with the design team. If an organization decision needed to be made quickly, the team could be pulled together to collaborate with little advance notice, keeping communication open and frequent.

When additional staff assistance was needed for system design or testing, the experts had the power to pull resources from their departments and, in turn, backfill those resources in their activities and responsibilities. Additionally, the departmental workflow experts

gained in-depth knowledge and insight into the new system. Working alongside application specialists, they learned the entire process of systems analysis and design and were intimately involved with not only the design and build of the system, but also the unit testing, integrated testing, and training.

The marriage of the department workflow experts with the vendor specialists and consultants with significant application and revenue cycle experience proved a great relationship. The biggest issues encountered were hardware and network-related and quickly resolved.

Due to the commitment of the organization and the vendor, and the right resource mix early in the process, the implementation was a success. The vision had been communicated clearly and the team took pride and ownership in accomplishing that vision. Although other factors of a successful project implementation are necessary, the key factor to the success of this project was the commitment to the right mix of people, processes and technologies.

### News Flash!

*Fletcher Allen Health Care,  
another Beacon Partners  
client, has achieved  
Stage 7 status!*

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## Current Beacon Partners' Epic Engagements\*

Baylor College of Medicine  
Children's Hospital Boston  
Children's Hospital of Denver  
Cook Children's Health Care  
Cooper Health System  
Driscoll Children's Hospital  
Fletcher Allen Health Care

Group Health Associates  
Michigan Medical  
Northwestern Medical Faculty  
Park Nicollet Health Services  
Parkland Health and Hospital  
Premier Health Partners

Riverbend Medical Group  
Sparrow Health System  
Tri-Health Inc.  
University of California Davis  
University of Chicago Hospitals  
University of Texas Southwest  
University of Washington

\*Partial listing of Beacon Partners' current Epic clients

### Health Information Exchange (HIE):

*A primer to continue your governance journey along the physician-hospital alignment continuum*

By Kevin Burchill, Esq., FACHE

The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 has been ballyhooed as the greatest impetus to bring providers *together* based upon Health Information Technology (HIT) adoption. With a net-new investment of some \$19B to adopt Electronic Medical Record (EMR) technologies in hospitals, healthcare settings and physician offices, the pace of adoption is dictated by so-called incentive payments that begin in 2011. Organizations have been re-thinking short-term goals, revising intermediate capital and operating tactics and adjusting their longer-term strategies to include enhanced alignment efforts between and among providers utilizing HIEs as the basis for these relationships.

Like any sustainable long-term strategy, healthcare organizations need to consider a myriad of factors as they begin this journey. It has been often said that lawyers memorialize deals that business people strike. Relationships are the key to beginning these agreement-making processes. Hospital-hospital, physician-physician, physician-hospital are just the most obvious types of relations that could lead to effective governance structures surrounding HIEs by providers.

For more of this editorial viewpoint, go to:

[Beacon Partners' ARRA/HITECH Resource Center](#)

### Spotlight on 2010

All that occurred in the healthcare industry during 2009 created a sense of excitement, combined sometimes with confusion and often frustration. Add the challenges of the economy in general, and most would say that they are not unhappy to see the end of 2009.

But, have we really turned the corner? February 2009 brought the launch of the stimulus package to the healthcare industry from the ARRA/HITECH. The challenges of investing in EHR technologies have not been easy. However, doing so not only will improve your healthcare organization's productivity and thus the bottom line, but also ultimately improve overall patient care.

What we're hearing from conversations with healthcare executives over the last several months is that healthcare organizations are implementing EHR technologies not for the stimulus money, but to avoid the penalties and, simply, because it's the right thing to do.

According to an *Information Week* article that includes a report from Robert Half Technology, Healthcare CIOs are among IT leaders with the most ambitious hiring plans for early 2010. Even though the challenges still remain, there is definitely a more optimistic outlook as we day-dream about 2010. If you have been procrastinating about implementing an EHR technology strategy, there is no time to waste.

While there is much that needs to be done, and we all need to be prepared for a lot of activity this coming year, we are confident that we have indeed turned a corner.

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