Enhancing AAAs' Cross-Sector Opportunities with Health Information Exchange
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The purpose of this document is to share the value and use case for Maine's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) organizations to leverage the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE) infrastructure in order to enhance their healthcare partnerships and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their cross-sector services.

AAAs Reliance on Integrated Health Information Systems

As new laws, emerging funding opportunities, and value-based changes in healthcare delivery have led AAA organizations to expand their service portfolios to include additional integrated care and evidence-based health and wellness programs, health information technology has taken on an even more important role in driving their success and sustainability. The ability for AAAs to seamlessly share data with hospitals, long-term care facilities, and accountable care organizations has increasingly become a critical requirement for enhancing their partnerships with the healthcare communities in which they serve.

However, Maine's AAAs must currently rely on healthcare provider-specific health information technology to adequately respond to this changing landscape. Meaning, to get the critical information on their clients' health, wellness, and wellbeing that could be used to support the delivery and usage of their home- and community-based programs, the AAAs must often technically connect to and become competent in proprietary and/or siloed software systems specific to each partner organization. For AAAs with limited funding and information technology support, this interoperability model is not sustainable.

About Maine's Statewide Health Information Exchange

Maine's statewide HIE is designed precisely to overcome organizations' challenges of having to connect to multiple healthcare locations to receive a comprehensive picture of an individual's health risks, conditions, and outcomes. The HIE's infrastructure, operated by HealthInfoNet, links an individual's critical health information across unaffiliated healthcare locations throughout the state as a means of improving the safety, quality, and delivery of patient care and population health.

The following bullets provide a snapshot of the HIE's function and utility in the state (as of June 2022):

- Over 1.3 million individuals' health information is securely managed and shared with HIE-participating organizations for care management and population management purposes.

- Over 870 healthcare organizations are connected to the HIE, including:

    o All acute care and critical access hospitals, federally qualified health centers, long-term care facilities, Maine Emergency Medical Services agencies, and reference laboratories

    o A majority of primary care and specialty care sites; some behavioral health organizations

    o Many State-managed systems, such as the Maine Department of Corrections, Prescription Monitoring Program, Health and Environment Testing Laboratory, and Immunization Information Registry

    o The national eHealth Exchange network, enabling access to the Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, and United States Coast Guard health information systems

- Over 6,400 authorized end users are accessing the HIE's services on a monthly basis to support clinical decision-making and population health management efforts on an average of 180,000 unique individuals.

Benefits for AAAs' Participation in Maine's HIE Network

Cross-sector partnerships between AAAs' social services and healthcare providers' medical services offer a promising approach to establishing local systems that are aligned to meet the interrelated social and medical health-related needs of Maine's aging population. Especially when recent changes in the healthcare system are incentivizing AAAs to improve their clients' health outcomes and provide higher quality care at lower costs through a coordinated effort.

The following bullets provide a few ways that Maine's statewide HIE infrastructure can support Maine's AAAs in this endeavor:

- Review clients' medical risks, conditions, and outcomes to establish appropriate in-home care and case management plans and to inform proper service referral coordination activities.

- Consider clients' social determinants of health (SDOH) and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) information in conjunction with their medical histories to create safer and more inclusive service experiences.

- Identify clients at-risk for returning to the Emergency Department or being readmitted to the Inpatient setting in the next 30 days in order to put in place necessary prevention programs.

- Receive real-time notifications for when clients visit and discharge from the Emergency Department and admit to and discharge from the Inpatient setting to put in place necessary intervention programs.

- Identify when clients are transferred to/from hospitals and long-term care facilities to proactively make contact with care teams to prepare discharge plans and follow-up visits.

- Learn when clients have passed away to help facilitate appropriate communications and planning efforts with care teams and family members.

- Improve staff satisfaction by putting data in their hands to make the most meaningful, informed, and empowered decisions on behalf of their clients.

- Use clients' statewide health records to establish more formal partnerships with healthcare organizations, such as by collaboratively tracking care outcomes, participating in clinical pathways, streamlining billing, and coordinating intervention efforts – all leading to improved efficiencies and opportunities for expanding business lines.

- Become more closely involved with the long-term services and supports (LTSS) community by sharing critical information on clients' program utilization and referrals to keep care teams in the loop with most recent activities.

HIE Participant Details for Maine's AAAs

For Maine's AAAs, HealthInfoNet offers both viewing and data sharing HIE participation options, with the requirement that the AAAs are defined as HIPAA-covered treating provider entities. To learn more about what's involved in becoming an HIE participant, AAA organizations can visit our website here.

As an incentive to bridge clinical and community settings in the value of improving patient care and population health, HealthInfoNet has established a special AAA participation fee as follows:

- **Implementation Fee:** Waived; no upfront fee

- **Annual Subscription Fee:** $750 flat fee per year

For questions or additional information, please contact HealthInfoNet's Client Engagement team via email at clientengagement@hinfonet.org.