

Healthcare Interoperability Partner™



Health Information Exchange Implementation Case Study

Wichita, Kansas: A Healthcare Community
Preparing for the Future

623 SW 10th Avenue ♦ Topeka, KS 66612
800.435.2104 ♦ www.KaMMCOHealthSolutions.com

A Thriving Community

Wichita, often referred to as “Cowtown,” due to its historic role at the end of the Chisholm Trail, is today considered a “high tech” and “advanced industries” hub. Wichita is often regarded as an epicenter for culture, media, and trade. It serves as host to several large museums, theaters, parks, and entertainment venues and is home to a number of four-year colleges including Wichita State University, Newman University, and Friends University. Wichita is considered the largest city in Kansas with an estimated metropolitan population of 637,394 in 2013.

The Wichita medical training area is considered robust given the presence of the KU School of Medicine and two large, competitive hospital systems — Wesley Medical Center, affiliated with HCA; and Via Christi Health Systems, affiliated with Ascension Health. On a biennial basis, the Medical Society of Sedgwick County (MSSC) reports the economic impact of the healthcare and related industries in the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). A few of the recent report findings include:

- Wichita has the second lowest Health Care Index value compared to Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Omaha, and Tulsa.
- Wichita has the best healthcare professional to patient ratio compared to Kansas City, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City.
- Wichita provides nearly \$7 billion in direct revenues to the local economy.
- More than 1 in 6 employees in the Wichita MSA worked directly in healthcare and related industries resulting in payroll of over \$2.8 billion.¹

It is clear that while Wichita is a mid-size, mid-western city, it has a robust and active healthcare economy.

Challenge

In 2008, Wichita physicians recognized the era of the health information exchange (HIE) was on the horizon.

Strategies

This pioneering physician group believed a credible, successful HIE endeavor required physician involvement, significant funding sources, effective governance modeling, reliable and customizable technology, and vested partnerships.

Physicians as Leaders

Wichita physicians, with leadership from the MSSC, began exploring options for electronically sharing patient information through an HIE. In 2009, the Wichita Health Information Exchange (WHIE) was established as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) and a physician-led board of directors was appointed to provide oversight.

“The exchange of vital patient information among providers is essential to a highly functioning healthcare system. It is critical the providers lead this healthcare transformation to ensure the appropriate and ethical use of this technology.”

Joe Davison, MD
Vice President, WHIE Board of Directors
Member, KHIN Board of Directors

Kansas Accepts ARRA Funds

Parallel to the efforts in Wichita, Kansas, a national effort was underway to build HIEs across the nation. In 2009, approximately \$48 billion was allocated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to provide incentives to physicians through the Meaningful Use of Health Information Technology. This included funding for each state to establish and build a technical infrastructure to exchange data. Kansas received \$9 million in funding. With a substantial sum of money came many interested parties with specific agendas about how to pursue the development of a Kansas HIE.

Aligning Interests

The physicians in Wichita, with support of the MSSC, aligned with the Kansas Medical Society (KMS) to support the development of a statewide HIE. They believed this would result in one unified voice representing aligned interests and would, therefore, increase the likelihood of an effective HIE structure being built and managed in a manner agreeable with, and supported by, the physician community.

Statewide, Provider-Led HIE Emerges

In 2010, the KMS approached the Kansas Hospital Association (KHA) to join the effort in establishing a provider-led HIE. KHA was supportive of the creation of a new not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) HIE that would provide core services to hospitals and physicians in Kansas. In December of 2010, the KMS, KHA, and WHIE filed incorporation papers to create a not-for-profit company, the Kansas Health Information Network, Inc. (KHIN). Laura McCrary, Ed.D, was hired in 2010 as the Executive Director of KHIN. Her responsibility was to establish and operationalize the company. A small KHIN Board of Directors was appointed to assist her. This board was comprised of the leadership of the founding organizations, KMS, KHA, and WHIE.

Technology Vendor Selection Critical

One of the most critical early decisions was to select a technology vendor to provide the exchange functionality. Dr. McCrary brought with her extensive knowledge of existing HIE vendors and, in December of 2010, KHIN formalized a contract with Informatics Corporation of America (ICA) of Nashville, TN, to provide the statewide technology infrastructure for Kansas.

The decision to choose ICA over other more well-known HIE vendors has been vital to KHIN's success. ICA demonstrated a progressive attitude toward helping all healthcare providers with a certified electronic health record (EHR) to connect and share health information with KHIN. ICA was willing to work with EHR vendors in developing a method to transport data to KHIN, as well as to the public health registries, and eventually to the KHIN statewide personal health record.

Due to the progressive nature of the Wichita healthcare market, the two large hospitals in Wichita were the first organizations to begin sharing data in the exchange in August 2012. This was a significant accomplishment and paved the way for other smaller hospitals and clinics to have confidence in participating in an HIE.

KHIN Franchises WHIE; Project Manager Hired

In Wichita, the WHIE Board of Directors remained intact and hired a project manager to manage the HIE activities. The project manager reports to the WHIE Board of Directors, as well as to Dr. McCrary at KHIN. This strategy has worked well as it allows the WHIE Board to manage the development of the HIE in Wichita while utilizing the resources KHIN brought to the table, including the ICA technical platform and the KHIN Help Desk. WHIE is now considered a franchise of KHIN and the two organizations and their respective boards work together seamlessly. Today, there are over 1,000 organizations that are KHIN members with almost 400 sharing data in the exchange. KHIN is now the largest HIE in the nation in terms of the sheer number of data connections. More information on KHIN can be found at www.khinonline.org.

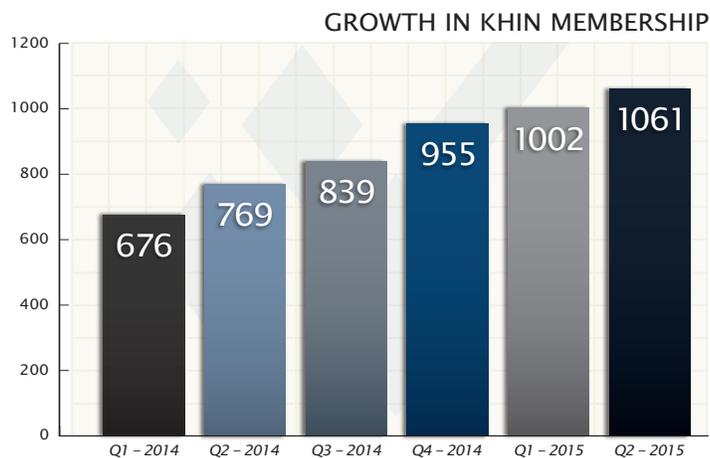
Results

The most significant WHIE success factor is that the unique collaborative effort paved the path which led to the formation of the statewide health information network, KHIN; the largest HIE in the nation.

Creating and Delivering Value

An integral success factor for the KHIN/WHIE partnership hinges upon KHIN's formula for success -- creating and delivering value to the member organizations. As Meaningful Use progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2, it became apparent that many physicians and small hospitals did not have the resources nor the internal IT staff to address the data transport requirements of Stage 2. KHIN stepped forward and assumed responsibility for helping physicians and small hospitals meet the transition of care requirements, patient engagement requirements, and public health requirements. KHIN provides Certificates of Achievement to signify member organizations have successfully met Meaningful Use Stage 2 and guarantees member organizations will meet data transport requirements.

At right, graphs illustrate KHIN growth in membership and KHIN queries over the last 18 months.



Snapshot of the number of KHIN Participating Hospitals and Ambulatory Facilities at a given point in time.



Snapshot of the number of KHIN Queries at a given point in time.

Results cont.

Now that KHIN/WHIE manages a large amount of real time clinical data, the value proposition for many members has shifted to the ability to provide alerts and data analytics. Examples include:

- Alerts sent to primary care providers when a patient has been admitted or discharged from a hospital;
- Quality reports which provide documentation to demonstrate clinics and providers are achieving ACO measures; and,
- Ad hoc reports for population health.

As the healthcare industry travels the roadmap to interoperability, KHIN/WHIE are strides ahead in this endeavor and able to serve as a guiding influence to other organizations across the nation intently focused on the future of healthcare.

Your First Step

Since 2010, Dr. Laura McCrary has been steering the KHIN organization in such a manner that the organization is now renowned as one of the largest, most successful HIEs in the country. KaMMCO Health Solutions, Inc. is an organization with a board comprised of physician and hospital leaders. This provider-led approach, combined with the expertise and experience of Dr. McCrary and her staff, positions KaMMCO Health Solutions, Inc. to serve as a guiding influence for organizations who seek a partner in the development of an HIE, utilization of data analytics, and ultimately, transformation of healthcare delivery across the country.

To plan and build the infrastructure necessary for a sustainable HIE and/or mine the collected data for the purpose of developing meaningful reports has proven daunting for most. KaMMCO Health Solutions, Inc. partners with healthcare providers, integrated delivery networks, independent practice associations, accountable care organizations, health plans, and others who face the challenges of the new healthcare marketplace and risk-based payment structures. Stakeholders can look to KaMMCO Health Solutions, Inc. to plan and assist in building the HIE technical infrastructure necessary and generate analytic reports required for clinical integration, care coordination, quality reporting, and value-based payment structures.

As has often been said, the hardest step is the first step. As your organization prepares to take the first step in planning for and building a sustainable HIE for your healthcare community, call KaMMCO Health Solutions, Inc. to take that step with you.

Contact:
KaMMCO Health Solutions, Inc.
Laura McCrary, Ed.D
Senior Vice President
800.435.2104 lmccrary@kammco.com

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¹ *Serving the Community Well: The Economic Impact of Wichita's Health Care and Related Industries.* Analysis prepared by the Center for Economic Development and Business Research, Wichita State University for MSSC. December, 2014.