The People of eHealth: Roles of eHealth Workers

Foundational Curriculum:
Cluster 1: eHealth
Module 1: Introduction to eHealth
Unit 2: The People of eHealth: Roles of eHealth Workers

FC-C1M1U2

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Unit Objectives

- Identify types of health care providers who use health IT/eHealth
- Identify the eHealth role service categories
- Explain the five levels of eHealth roles
- Describe roles of health information management/health IT professionals
- Describe healthcare providers

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Who Uses eHealth?

• It is often assumed that only providers of care, like nurses or doctors, use eHealth

• However, there are over 250 types of workers, some clinical and others non-clinical, who use eHealth in their jobs
  – Clinical roles include those jobs primarily associated with caring for patients and their families
  – Non-clinical roles include jobs that are associated primarily with administration, technology, business or other processes
Who Uses eHealth (Cont’d)

- In addition to patient care roles, eHealth workers include those staff who work in:
  - administration
  - legal
  - education
  - information systems and technology
  - environmental services
  - security
  - biomedicine
  - research
  - nutrition, and
  - other roles
Types of Care Providers

• These types of care providers can be categorized into five basic domains:
  – **Administration** (including those who work in management, financial, legal, education and business services)
  – **Direct Patient Care** (people who provide direct care to patients, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists, environmental services and therapists)
  – **Engineering/Information Systems/Information and Communications Technology** (those who work with machinery, computer and technological systems, and hardware and software)
  – **Informatics** (those working in the intersection of technology and clinical services)
  – **Research/Biomedicine** (staff who perform healthcare research, and specialize in developing and using technology to improve biological processes and functions)
The Five Basic Domains

- Administration
- Direct Patient Care
- Engineering/Information Systems/ICT
- Informatics
- Research and Biotechnology
Healthcare Roles

• There are many roles which are evolving to include electronic health aspects
• This is especially true in many European states where electronic records are being used more frequently
• You can find over 250 roles listed in HITComp:
  – www.hitcomp.org

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The Role of an eHealth Worker

• Jobs within the eHealth field can be broken down into several roles within the five domains
• These roles include clinical jobs as well as non-clinical jobs
• These roles can be broken down into type:
  – **Executive** (higher level organizational administrative and leadership roles) (e.g., Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Managing Director, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) or Chief Information Officer (CIO))
  – **Operational/Technical** (trade and technically skilled roles) (e.g., radiology technician, research assistant, or informatics specialist)
  – **Professional** (healthcare roles usually requiring advanced degrees along with credentials or certifications) (e.g., doctor, nurse or pharmacist)
  – **Secretary/Managerial** (clerical, managerial, supervisory and lower level administrative roles) (e.g., nurse manager, receptionist or nutritional department data entry clerk)
Further, the roles can be divided into **service category** (a general characteristic of a type of service provided):

- **Ancillary**: members of the allied health team who provide support to primary providers, physicians or nurses. Examples include therapists, technicians, as well as assistants.

- **Engineering/ICT/IS**: members of division responsible for the building design and deployment as well as maintenance of the information and communications technology systems.

- **Nursing**: members of the nursing or nursing-related services division, providing direct and immediate patient care.

- **Physician/Provider/Medical Staff**: members of the division of physician or mid-level providers who specialize in diagnosis and treatment of patients.
Finally, each role can be categorized in terms of level, from **baseline**, to **basic**, **intermediate**, **advanced** and **expert**.

All eHealth workers need to have at least **baseline skills**.

Baseline skills are the foundational skills needed to perform at the minimum level for any job; they include **soft skills**, such as communication and professionalism, and **hard skills**, such as ability to use equipment and technology.
The Role of an eHealth Worker (cont’d)

• Levels do not always correspond to the job type or service due to specialization of occupation roles and responsibilities
  – For example, a CEO may need only basic or intermediate eHealth skills at a certain organization, whereas a technical assistant may need advanced skills
  – All physicians or nurses may not need the same level of eHealth skills, depending on their specialty, such as informatics, emergency medicine or rehabilitative care
Roles and Job Progression

• As you progress in your eHealth career, you may find roles that act as building blocks to advancement

• **Example 1**: a clinical nurse may become educated in information technology, which can enable him to become a nurse informaticist

• **Example 2**: a nurse informaticist could take management courses, which could propel her to become an clinical informatics manager

• **Example 3**: a member, a clinical informatics manager, could opt to return to school for specialization and certification, and with work and education could ultimately become a chief information officer
Sample Job Progression Ladder: Registered Nurse

- Registered Nurse
- Charge Nurse
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Master of Science in Nursing
- Director of Nursing
The Role of a Health Information Management/Health IT Professional

• Health Information Management (HIM), the administration of health information and records, was historically a unique role performed by professionals in the hospital specializing in paper-based medical records
  – With the advent of electronic health records, all workers in healthcare must take on at least some aspects of health information management
The Role of a Health Information Management/Health IT Professional

• HIM professionals are increasingly becoming:
  – standard-setters for electronic health records;
  – advocates for quality patient records and for patient access and utilization of personal health information;
  – and data experts for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing health information*

• The HIM field has evolved from paper medical records management to a wide range of roles and responsibilities, including EMR management

From AHIMA’s Summary Findings from the HIM Workforce Study: [http://bok.ahima.org/doc?oid=58258#.Wa1QEMix02w](http://bok.ahima.org/doc?oid=58258#.Wa1QEMix02w)
Healthcare Providers

- **Healthcare provider**: This is an individual who provides preventive, curative, promotional or rehabilitative health care services in a systematic way to people, families or communities
  - Usually a skilled worker or professional, with or without a certificate, license, or technical college or university-level education/degree, depending on requirements for practice, who works directly with patients and families
Healthcare Providers

• A health professional may operate within all branches of healthcare, including medicine, surgery, dentistry, midwifery, pharmacy, psychology, nursing or allied health professions
  • Usually licensed or certificated and must hold a college or university degree or equivalent formal education
    – May also be a public/community health expert
    – Also called a clinician
    – Also called a direct care provider
Healthcare Providers (cont’d)

• In eHealth, providers deliver healthcare to patients and other consumers
  – This can be accomplished:
    • In person (within a healthcare setting)
    • Digitally or electronically (by electronic health – eHealth – or telehealth methods)
  – However, health care can also occur without direct participation of a healthcare provider (mobile health, or mHealth, applications, patient-generated records or Patient Health Records, or by other digital or electronic means)
Healthcare Providers (cont’d)

• Healthcare providers include (but are not limited to):
  – Doctors
  – Nurses
  – Mid-level providers (physician assistants, nurse practitioners, etc.)
  – Patient Care Assistants
  – Therapists and Technicians (including Radiology, Physical and Respiratory, among others)
  – Social Workers and Counselors
  – Nutritionists
Unit Review Checklist

- Identified types of health care providers who use health IT/eHealth (JB08)
- Identified the eHealth role service categories
- Explained the five levels of eHealth roles
- Described roles of health information management/health IT professionals (JB03)
- Described healthcare providers
Unit Review Exercises

• Use the HITComp tool to identify some of the 250 different types of workers who use eHealth in their jobs

• [http://hitcomp.org](http://hitcomp.org)

• Part 1: Find types of workers related to: 1. administration, 2. research/biomedicine, as well as 3. patient care roles. Name one example of each

• Part 2: Use the HITComp tool to find the description for the role “phlebotomist”
  4. What is a phlebotomist in Italian?
  5. In what service category is phlebotomist?
  6. What role type is phlebotomist?
1. What does HIM stand for in regards to eHealth?
   a. Healthcare Informatics Maintenance
   b. Health Information Management
   c. Healthcare Information Maintenance
   d. Health Identification Management

2. A nursing assistant would be categorized into which of the following eHealth domains?
   a. Research/Biomedicine
   b. Direct Patient Care
   c. Security
   d. Administration

3. Fill in the blank: All eHealth workers need to have at least ____________ skills.
   a. Baseline
   b. Intermediate
   c. Advanced
   d. Basic
Unit Exam

4. Which of the following is an example of a healthcare provider?
   a. Clinician
   b. Direct care provider
   c. Therapist
   d. All of the above

5. A hospital lawyer would be categorized into which of the following eHealth domains?
   a. Research/Biomedicine
   b. Direct Patient Care
   c. Administration
   d. Security