

The Importance of Meaningful Use

By Hillary Ross, Consultant

The recent HIMSS conference included a physician symposium where this year's hot topic was "meaningful use" and the physicians' role in its process. In the early years of the HIMSS conference, the physician symposium drew approximately 30 physicians, but this year the auditorium was buzzing with the energy of about 300 clinicians. The increased attendance reflects the urgency of the clinicians' involvement in the current state of maximizing technology to transform health care.

"Meaningful Use" has become significantly important, in part, due to the funding that the government is now offering to providers as incentives to implement certified EHR and use those systems in a meaningful way. Physicians with informatics expertise are leading the charge on implementation and meaningful use to bridge the gap between IT and the medical community. Physicians are needed to assist the providers in the selection of a system, implementation and working with the organization's clinicians to relinquish their paper charts for an EHR. As more hospitals

are implementing and the government is offering huge funds for meeting certain stages of meaningful use, the necessity for a physician with a different level of expertise has emerged. A physician with an eye towards optimization and transformation will be critical for providers who want to achieve meaningful use. By optimizing and transforming the information garnered from the EHR, this new breed of physician can effectuate the ultimate meaningful use by improving patient care, increasing safety and reducing costs.

Witt/Kieffer has a long history of specializing in the recruitment of IT physicians, and we see that these senior level physicians with IT expertise are in demand. Hospitals, academic medical centers, consulting firms and vendors are all vying for their expertise. While their titles take on many different forms from the traditional CMIO to VP, Transformation and Optimization, they offer critical proficiency for the adoption of technology that is transforming health care delivery.

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