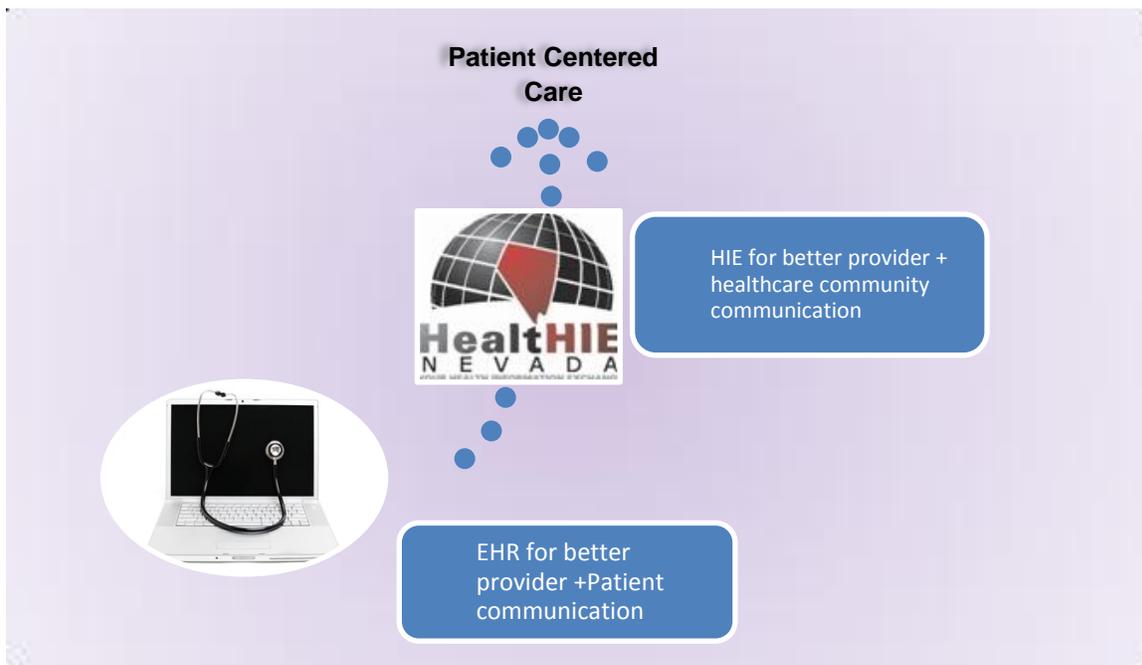


Let no EHR be an island

Health Information Technology (HIT) is seeing the heights of popularity. [Meaningful use](#) requirements, new payment approaches that stress care coordination, and federal financial incentives are all driving the interest and demand for Health Information Technology. The adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) in small to medium sized physician offices is particularly popular. HealthInsight's Regional Extension Center (REC) has helped over 30% of Nevada providers adopt an EHR and reach meaningful use. However, for the more than 30% of providers who have demonstrated Meaningful use, there is another engagement piece in the HIT movement.

EHRs are an amazing tool for information gathering at the patient and provider level and would be a full solution if patients sought all their health needs from one entity, but that is not always true. Collaboration between the providers and the healthcare community at large is a necessity. Along with adopting an EHR and reaching data standardization via meaningful use, the other side of the HIT bridge is the need for disparate systems to collaborate using an Health Information Exchange (HIE).



HIE will dissolve the difficulties in healthcare collaboration as it will allow EHRs to gain one “tell all” interface. From the EHR, providers will be able to receive instant updates on patient health changes such as laboratory reports and hospital visits. HIE will connect providers in various care settings with the most up-to-date health information as patients travel through the continuum of care. So if you are a provider who has reached MU and/or feel as if you’re ready to make the next step toward a completely paperless and integrated HIT experience, HIE is the next step on the road to patient centered care.

The success story below is a great example of how HIT and the HIE helped a clinic streamline their work.

[Healthcare 360, Inc](#)¹, a management company, began using an EMR for a client in September 2012. An old-school internal medicine practice, we systematically scanned an enormous amount of paper into the system from what appeared to be an avalanche of paper. With a practice of 12 providers in three locations, you can imagine the number of charts that needed to be managed after 25 years of practicing together. In order to provide better patient care, streamline information, participate in Meaningful Use, and Accountable Care Organizations, we needed electronic data, not paper.

While the EMR came with some Lab connections already installed, it wasn't enough. Working with each Lab to obtain a connection to the EMR was expensive, time consuming, and labor intensive. We needed a better way so we researched HealthIE Nevada² and met with the team. One week later, we had two Labs connected to the EMR. This allowed the providers to not only obtain electronic results of their patients in their EMR inbox, but could see which ones had abnormal results immediately since they are marked in red. And, the cost was minimal!

The HIE continues to use its resources to obtain connections to more [Labs](#)³ on a regular basis. And, as Labs are added, there is no additional cost to the practice! This is a great service to HealthCare 360 and its clients from not only a cost and speed of implementation perspective, but it also keeps us vendor/lab independent. Being vendor/lab independent means that our clients can use most any EMR and still be able to take advantage of connections to their patients' labs. Plus, HIE of Nevada incorporated a VHR (Virtual Health Record) which allows doctors to obtain their patients' information from any computer without the use of an EMR.

Michael McCarthy, with Healthcare 360, states, "in the course of our start-up for the ACO, we knew that information availability and accessibility at the point of care that is accurate and relevant would make all the difference in improving quality, reducing cost, and enhancing the patient experience." As the velocity of information to the practitioner shrinks, so does the size and anonymity of the health care system. Having the correct information in the right place on time will allow the focus to get back on the patient and not on unnecessary administrative processes.

From a technical and practical perspective, using the HIE for your practice's access to patient results makes a lot of sense in the short run and the long.

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