



Summer Institute in Nursing Informatics 2019  
Podium Presentation

**Improving Care Transitions with Innovative Technology and Health Services Research: A Journey through AHRQ's Health IT Portfolio**

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Transitions of care are the movements of patients between providers or clinical settings which typically occur when primary care providers refer patients to specialty care, or when patients are discharged from the hospital to subsequent care settings. During care transitions, critical information aimed to improve the patient's condition and health outcomes needs to be accurately communicated and coordinated between health professionals, the patient, and the family to ensure that safe, high-quality care is provided and care continuity is maintained. Poorly managed transitions can lead to costly, unsafe, and low quality health care. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) notes that Medicare patients typically experience multiple provider transfers during post-acute care at a cost to the U.S. health care system of approximately \$15 billion per year. In particular, people with multiple chronic conditions (MCC) undergo many care transitions across settings and providers and are particularly at risk for avoidable adverse events during these many transitions. MCC patients are high cost, high need patients that account for 65% of health care spending and mitigating their risks during care transitions has the potential to greatly reduce care costs and improve care quality. Additionally, uncoordinated care transitions result in unneeded stress and burden on patients and caregivers as well as considerable burden on clinicians who don't have the necessary information to deliver high quality care and must expend a great deal of effort to obtain this information. Health IT has the potential to improve care transitions by enhancing communication and coordination, thereby reducing duplicate services and mitigating adverse events. Technology can facilitate an integrated multi-disciplinary approach to improving care by defragmenting information, improving communication, and assuring the care team and other stakeholders have access to reliable and complete health information that may be located in other care settings or disparate systems. Additionally, health IT has the capability to empower providers, patients, and caregivers in sharing the responsibility of improving health outcomes while reducing adverse events and costs. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is committed to improving the safety and quality of America's healthcare system and recognizes that technology can be leveraged to achieve the goal. This presentation will provide an overview of AHRQ's Health IT Research portfolio, discuss a selection of funded research projects that are aimed to improve care transitions through the use of innovative health IT solutions, and provide information on available AHRQ funding opportunities that support research that focuses on the use of health IT to improve care transitions.