

# Maryland Health Care Commission

## Dental Health Information Technology Initiative

### About The Initiative

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) is engaging dentists and other stakeholders in discussions around the benefits and lessons learned from successful implementation of health information technology (health IT) in dental practices. The goal of the Dental Health IT Initiative is to promote adoption and optimal use of health IT among dental practices through peer to peer learning. Key components of health IT include:

- Electronic health records (EHRs), an electronic version of a patient's health record;
- Health information exchange (HIE), the secure electronic exchange of health information between providers; and
- Telehealth, the delivery of health services using telecommunications and related technologies.

EHR adoption is growing among Maryland dentists, with 60 percent reporting that they used an EHR in 2018 as compared to 53 percent in 2017.<sup>1</sup> Implementation of other health IT components is also expected to increase as federal efforts to promote health IT interoperability seek to connect providers across care settings. The benefits of using health IT include improved communication with providers and patients, reduced paperwork, and reductions in duplication and waste.<sup>2</sup>



### Key Activities

#### Health IT Assessment

The MHCC collaborates with the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) and its component dental societies to conduct an annual health IT assessment of dentists licensed in Maryland. In 2019, the MHCC also began collaborating with the American Dental Association (ADA) to conduct a nationwide assessment of the utilization and perceived value of health IT. Information collected from these surveys is used to develop programs and educational resources for Maryland dentists.

#### Shared Learning

Shared learning is an opportunity for dentists and other dental professionals to learn about health IT from the experiences of their peers and from experts within the field. The MHCC facilitates these opportunities at various

<sup>1</sup> According to an environment scan conducted by MHCC in 2018 (85 of the responding 143 dentists) and 2017 (76 of the responding 141 dentists). The 2017 Dental Electronic Health Record Adoption report is available at:

[http://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit/documents/HIT\\_Dental\\_EHR\\_Adoption\\_20180404.pdf](http://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit/documents/HIT_Dental_EHR_Adoption_20180404.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> HealthIT.gov, Benefits of Health IT. Available at: <https://www.healthit.gov/topic/health-it-basics/benefits-health-it>.

events focused on interactive dialogue and sharing best practices among the dental community. Educational events take place at locations across the State and are offered in partnership with the MSDA and component societies for continuing education credits. Additional online learning events, such as Lunch & Learn webinars, offer convenient opportunities for dentists to receive information on topics of interest.

### Stakeholder Engagement

By engaging stakeholders in efforts to identify challenges, areas of opportunities, and best practices associated with health IT adoption and utilization, MHCC develops sound policies and industry leading programs. The MHCC invites dental stakeholders to participate in staff advisory workgroups, such as the Dental Health IT Workgroup and the HIE Policy Board, to ensure that the industry is represented in policy and program decisions.

#### MHCC Workgroups

For more information, or to get involved, contact

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### About The Maryland Health Care Commission

The MHCC is an independent regulatory agency whose mission is to plan for health system needs, promote informed decision-making, increase accountability, and improve access in a rapidly changing health care environment by providing timely and accurate information on availability, cost, and quality of services to policy makers, purchasers, providers and the public. The MHCC aims to be an open and accessible partner to stakeholders seeking information about health IT and efforts to modernize the health care industry.

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### Additional Information

- The MHCC webpage provides information about the agency's priorities, programs, and activities. The MHCC's Center for Health IT & Innovative Care Delivery (Center) publishes documents related to advancing the adoption and use of health IT in Maryland. The Center's webpage is available at: <https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit/hit.aspx>.
- The Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP) is Maryland's State-Designated HIE. CRISP provides information about its services and policies on its webpage at: [crisphealth.org](http://crisphealth.org).
- The ADA's Center for Informatics and Standards offers information about EHRs in dentistry at: <https://www.ada.org/en/member-center/member-benefits/practice-resources/dental-informatics/electronic-health-records>.
- The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) Health IT Playbook contains strategies, recommendations, and best practices related to health IT implementation in a variety of care settings. The Health IT Playbook is available at: <https://www.healthit.gov/playbook/>.

