Technical Assistance for Health Information Technology and Health Information Exchange in Medicaid and SCHIP

What is the AHRQ Technical Assistance to Medicaid and SCHIP all about?

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is providing technical assistance to Medicaid and SCHIP agencies to help them develop, implement, and participate in health information technology (health IT) and health information exchange (HIE). Through a contract with RTI International, AHRQ's technical assistance program will develop and provide a wide range of resources and tools to assist State Medicaid and SCHIP agencies in improving the delivery and coordination of care. In addition, these resources will improve the proactive management of health of Medicaid and SCHIP beneficiaries through the use of health IT. Finally, the program will be a resource for agencies needing assistance with plans for using or implementing HIEs to support internal and external business and operating needs and the efficient delivery of quality services.

What kinds of technical assistance will be offered?

AHRQ's TA Program will provide a range of resources, including general technical assistance provided through a repository of literature, tools, and lessons learned that can be accessed through the AHRQ National Resource Center. The program will also offer free Webinars featuring national experts and thought leaders on health IT and HIE topics of interest to Medicaid and SCHIP leaders. The program will also offer targeted technical assistance to small groups of agencies with more specific needs for information or tools in areas such as:

- Health IT/HIE policy and regulations
    - o Navigating the State and Federal regulatory environment
    - o Providing resources to assist agencies in identifying and interpreting regulations, laws, and/or guidance affecting HIE
    - o Providing resources to assist agencies in assessing compliance with such regulations, laws, and/or guidance
    - o Defining/refining an Agency's Health IT/HIE policy

- Adoption and use of data and technical standards
    - o Improving State understanding of health data and message standards such as HL7, SNOMED, and LOINC
    - o Adopting and implementing interoperability standards (i.e., Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) harmonized standards for HIE)

- HIE
    - o Assisting agencies in identifying opportunities to participate in local and regional HIEs

- Adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), Personal Health Records (PHRs) and e-prescribing
    - o Conducting needs assessment/gap analysis to determine needs of Medicaid and SCHIP information users and incorporate them into proposed solutions
    - o Assessing resources required and the costs/value to Medicaid and SCHIP agencies of implementing and maintaining health IT and HIE
    - o Providing methods for evaluating IT vendors and consulting organizations supporting Medicaid and SCHIP agencies in bridging the gap with external partners (including providers, health plans, public health, and local government) by using knowledge transfer from States that have done it successfully

- Business process analysis
    - o Evaluating existing business processes and identifying opportunities where health IT can make them more efficient and effective

- Quality measurement and improvement
    - o Assisting Medicaid and SCHIP agencies in developing evaluation programs to demonstrate improvements in efficiency and quality, including areas such as quality measurement, pay for performance, reducing/eliminating health disparities, evidence-based utilization management/utilization review, and management of prescription drugs

- Data analysis and knowledge management tools
    - o Assisting agencies in identifying warehousing/data mining tools that will assist in collecting, managing, and analyzing Medicaid and SCHIP data

- Communications
    - o Facilitating communications with HIE trading partners (e.g., providers, other payers, other Medicaid and SCHIP agencies)
    - o Facilitating communication between State and Federal agencies
    - o Establishing mechanisms for peer-to-peer technical assistance

- Education
    - o Assisting Medicaid and SCHIP agencies in developing and implementing education and outreach strategies for providers and beneficiaries
    - o Developing and disseminating information from promising practices and lessons learned

In addition, the program will set up Communities of Practice around topics identified through the needs assessment, where interested parties can engage in discussions and share lessons learned. Finally, the program will host a national educational meeting annually to discuss issues and share lessons learned. Topics for the 1 and 1/2-day meetings will be developed based on input from the Medicaid and SCHIP agencies.

Are the resources available to all Medicaid and SCHIP agencies?
Yes. All Medicaid and SCHIP agencies are eligible to participate in the programs.

How can Medicaid and SCHIP agencies learn about the resources that are available?
There are a number of ways to learn about what is available and to take advantage of the assistance offered by this program.

- o Check the Web site for important updates and program news: http://healthit.ahrq.gov/Medicaid-SCHIP

- *o* Register with the listserv to receive timely announcements of program updates

How can my Agency provide input into the development of the program?
There are a number of ways that you can provide input into the program.

- o **Email us at:** Medicaid-SCHIP-HIT@ahrq.hhs.gov

- o **Participate in the Needs Assessment:** All Medicaid and SCHIP agencies will receive a mailing from the AHRQ contractor, RTI, that will provide information about the program and will invite representatives of the agency to meet with program staff either in-person or by phone to discuss current and anticipated needs for technical assistance. The packages will be mailed in late Spring 2008.

What will NOT be included in the AHRQ TA to Medicaid and SCHIP program?
The program will not include the following types of assistance or resources:

- o Computer or software programming
- o Assistance in completing the Medicaid Information Technology Architecture self-assessment
- o Funding to purchase or implement software applications
- o Recommendations for specific vendor selection