



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SHOULD FACILITATE PUBLIC HEALTH TO PREVENT DIMINISHED HEALTH AND DISABILITY**

*Social determinants of public health should be incorporated into health information technology to improve efforts to prevent diminished health and prevent disability.*

A forum was held entitled “From Tasks to Process: The Case for Changing Health Information Technology to Improve Health Care” by the *Health Affairs* journal. Presenters at the forum were researchers, and information technology policy advocates.

### **Summary**

A regional model of health care delivery was presented at the forum. The model used information technology (IT) that involves patient-centered processes and focused on team effectiveness rather than on individual tasks of medical practice. The team approach to health care delivery was a remedy to fragmented health care delivery which leads to low quality health care. Teams are ineffective when errors lead to severe consequences, when task complexity exceeds the capacity of an individual, and when task environments are ill-defined. An effective team requires that human factor engineers, managers, clinicians, and patients learn new skills and behaviors to improve processes and health outcomes.

Regional models described at the forum yield better results than inadequate fragmented approaches that rely on providing patients with access to information online and enabling them to share data with others. There is value in the careful analysis of defined interoperable processes, sub-processes and interfaces, and in creating defined standards of practice, testing, monitoring and feedback to improve health outcome.

### **Disability Prevention Issue**

A health care system approach that focuses on teamwork and processes enabled by IT is superior to a fragmented health care system, but appears to focus on procedures associated with medical errors of reimbursable medical outcomes. There is concern that public health goals of patient lifestyles and social determinants may be inappropriately used that diminishes health of vulnerable populations in employer health plans. There is evidence that health risk surveys are used to place vulnerable people in high deductibles health programs that have been shown to diminish health and contribute to disability because of failure to access timely needed medical care and clinical preventive services.

**Activity**

A letter was written to the medical care director of the model information technology medical care program concerning IT from a public health perspective.

**Principle**

Information technology associated with health care reform should involve collaboration between non-reimbursable community-based public health factors and acute medical care teams to improve population-based health for people in America.