

THE EHI CCIO CAMPAIGN

EHealth Insider's campaign for every NHS trust in the UK to give consideration to appointing a chief clinical information officer.

Introduction

EHealth Insider has launched a national campaign calling for every NHS provider organisation to consider appointing a chief clinical information officer to provide clinical leadership on IM&T projects and the use of information to support improvements in clinical care. EHI terms this role chief clinical information officer.

We believe that a step change in clinical leadership on IT and the use of information is essential to improve clinical and quality outcomes for patients, but the campaign is particularly timely because of the NHS reforms now underway.

The changes outlined by the Liberating the NHS white paper will require effective leadership, backed by good information systems, to improve clinical quality and outcomes for patients. The NHS Information Revolution also requires investment in new clinical leaders whose expertise spans the clinical, technological and information domains. We see CCIOs as additive to existing NHS IT professionals.

While challenging, we believe that the CCIO role will provide an attractive new career path for clinicians committed to developing IT and using information to measure and improve the quality of health services. A range of clinicians will be suited to the role including doctors, nurses and those working in professions allied to medicine.

While it will take time to develop chief clinical information officers, some NHS organisations are already taking initial steps. The ultimate objective of the campaign is for the new post of NHS CCIO to become established as a 'must have' for all providers.

The case for clinically-led information

A key criticism of the National Programme for IT in the NHS, made by the National Audit Office in its three reports, is that it "failed to take clinicians with it" in developing and implementing modern information solutions. IT was too often something 'done to' clinicians, rather than led by them.

It is widely agreed that successful information strategies are as much about cultural change as they are about technology; indeed, the technology is often the 'easy bit'. Through running the annual EHI Awards, we have seen that successful NHS information projects are often clinically led and certainly have high levels user involvement.

We believe that NHS information projects need to do more than simply take clinicians with them: they need to be designed and led by clinicians. The technology needs to support their ambitions for improving the quality of care they deliver, rather than forcing them into unnatural or difficult ways of working.

EHI believes

- Information must not be considered in isolation from initiatives to improve clinical quality and/or efficiency, but should be integrated within them
- Effective information project design and delivery requires board-level championing and dedicated clinical resource
- Clinical leadership is required from project inception onwards
- Local NHS organisations need to develop highly capable clinical leaders to maximise the value and potential of information to improve clinical care quality
- As part of its Information Strategy, the Department of Health needs to send a clear signal to providers of NHS services that clinical leadership on information is critical to the wider NHS quality agenda.

The EHI CCIO Campaign has been inspired in part by the evolution of chief medical information officers in the US over the past two decades.

Approximately 2,000 US hospitals now employ CMIOs, according to the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives. This reflects the growing prominence of IT systems in health organisations in the delivery of patient care.

There is a significant body of literature, as well as anecdotal evidence, about the benefits that CMIOs have delivered to organisations and patients, by providing long-term commitment, expertise and leadership on IT projects and how information can be used to improve services.

The evidence for CCIOs

Relevance to the NHS reforms

The Department of Health has stated that the Information Revolution is vital to making the rest of its reforms work. In its response to the Information Revolution consultation paper, the British Computer Society called for clinical leadership in information programmes.

High quality, relevant and timely information is critical to enabling:

- Multi-disciplinary clinical collaboration to identify areas for improvement
- The measurement of outcomes, or clinically-relevant proxies for outcomes
- Stronger, clinically-led commissioning
- Informed choices by patients about how, when, where, and by whom to be treated
- The use of information by individuals to take control of their health.

There are a number of levers that are fundamental to the government's vision of healthcare that will fail without appropriate information, including:

- **Regulation** – proactive, risk-based regulation (from either the Care Quality Commission or Monitor) will only be practicable if regulators receive meaningful information in close to real time
- **Quality standards** – unless there is information about performance against the quality statements contained within standards these will be unenforceable

- **Commissioning** – unless relevant information is available to commissioners about clinical quality, decisions will only be made on the basis of cost
- **CQUIN (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation)** – attempts to shift the basis of reimbursement from activity to quality on a meaningful scale will fail unless data is available to inform the process
- **Quality accounts** – providers will be unable to report on quality measures that are meaningful to patients unless their information systems supply them with the appropriate information
- **Patient choice** – the information available to patients (through sources such as NHS Choices) is not helpful in exercising informed choice and without better provider level information this will not change.

Campaign aim: “Every NHS provider should consider appointing a chief clinical information officer to provide clinical leadership on IM&T projects and ensure that information is used to support improvements in clinical care.”

To achieve this aim EHI will:

- Build a broad base of support for the CCIO role
- Promote the concept of the CCIO as an essential part of the NHS Information Revolution
- Secure promotion for the role in the NHS Information Strategy
- Seek to gain the backing of Secretary of State for Health
- Work with appropriate professional bodies to develop the CCIO role as an attractive new career path for clinicians within NHS organisations
- Encourage NHS providers to commit to or to appoint a CCIO.

The
EHI CCIO
Campaign
objectives



How to get involved

We are asking people to give their support to the EHI CCIO Campaign by posting a public message of support on the campaign website, where you will also be able to find out more.

Once you have given your support, you will be prompted to invite friends or colleagues to back the campaign as well. Please pass the message on.

www.EHI.co.uk