Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) continue to grow and expand as disparate healthcare organizations need access to shared patient information in quick and secure ways. Sharing patient data electronically allows nurses, physicians and clinicians to provide the best care in the most efficient manner with the goal of improving patient outcomes and safety while reducing costs.

So where does a **Clinical Communication Platform** (CCP) fit into an HIE?

CARE COORDINATION

HIEs provide unaffiliated health systems with comprehensive information on patients with the goal of producing better medical decisions and improving patient outcomes. By having patient health information (PHI) readily available, nurses and physicians can better understand a patient's medical history, reducing the time needed to ascertain specific data such as allergies, medications and chronic health conditions. Right now, much of this information can be accessed via Electronic Health Records (EHRs).

EHRs, however, are mainly used for *documentation and revenue cycle management* for health systems, whereas a CCP is used for *critical, real-time communication and collaboration.* CCPs make care coordination a reality by allowing users access to cross-community directories, not just by names but by roles, with the ability to reach clinicians beyond the four walls of a single facility – in real time. CCPs are for critical real-time decisions in patient care; EHRs do not offer this kind of urgent communication.

COST REDUCTION

Another goal of HIEs is to reduce unnecessary medical costs. Information provided through an HIE can help reduce duplicated procedures, result in fewer medical mistakes, reduce paperwork and lower the burnout rate of clinicians. HIEs can also help lower readmission rates by providing improved access to information, giving clinicians better insight into patient health before making further decisions.

CCPs support this goal by delivering *actionable* information to HIE-affiliated clinicians through **secure messaging** and **voice calls**, reducing delays in immediate care, preventing sentinel events, and improving patient outcomes. The faster information can be communicated, the faster a care plan can be created for patients.

Additionally, faster and more efficient communication can improve job satisfaction for nurses, physicians and other healthcare professionals because it reduces the amount of time they spend waiting on others in the care team to respond to calls or pages. Insights gathered from tracking real-time communication results allows health system leaders to make decisions about their processes and ensure more value is delivered to the patients they serve.

HIPAA COMPLIANCE

HIEs and CCPs both have the same objective when it comes to PHI: protect it at all costs! As patients receive care from more than one organization, healthcare providers have turned to using smart devices to communicate with one another about patients – at times without securing PHI. The time-saving use of text messaging and the increase in the number of patients that providers are seeing may appear to override the need for security, but these violations can be costly to both the health systems, providers and ultimately patients.

HIEs have begun to realize the benefits of CCPs in aiding their network members in improving care. By connecting health systems on a single Clinical Communication Platform HIEs can more effectively achieve their goal of improving the quality of healthcare through the secure sharing of patient information.