

Top Challenges That Keep Hospital CIOs Up at Night

– Population Health

An Iatric Systems eBook



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Introduction

Hospital CIOs and IT leaders have a lot on their plate. Growing workloads, shrinking budgets, and continued rapid change most likely have you concerned about your ability to keep pace. Every day you and your staff are asked to take on more and more tasks. Many involve technology that's new and unfamiliar. All are important and needed urgently.

In a [2014 survey of hospital CIOs](#) by executive search firm SSi-SEARCH, when asked: "Which of the following areas does your health system perceive as most critical?" CIOs responded:

- [EHR optimization](#) - 66 percent
- [Population Health & Analytics Initiatives](#) - 63 percent
- [Meaningful Use Stage 2 \(and now Stage 3\)](#) - 59 percent

This eBook examines the challenge of Population Health Management and Analytics Initiatives and provides key steps to help them go more smoothly. When you go home at night, you'll know that your most critical projects are under control — on schedule, and done correctly and cost-effectively.

CIO Challenge: **Population Health**

Population health refers to improving the outcomes of members of an entire patient population, particularly underserved groups and those affected by environmental and economic factors that could adversely impact health. Its goals also include improving individual quality and patient experience, and reducing the per capita cost of care.

This eBook examines three areas of population health management where hospitals can focus their efforts, with the ultimate goal of improving population health.

- **Patient identity and EMPI**
- **Connecting to a Health Information Exchange (HIE)**
- **Population health analytics**

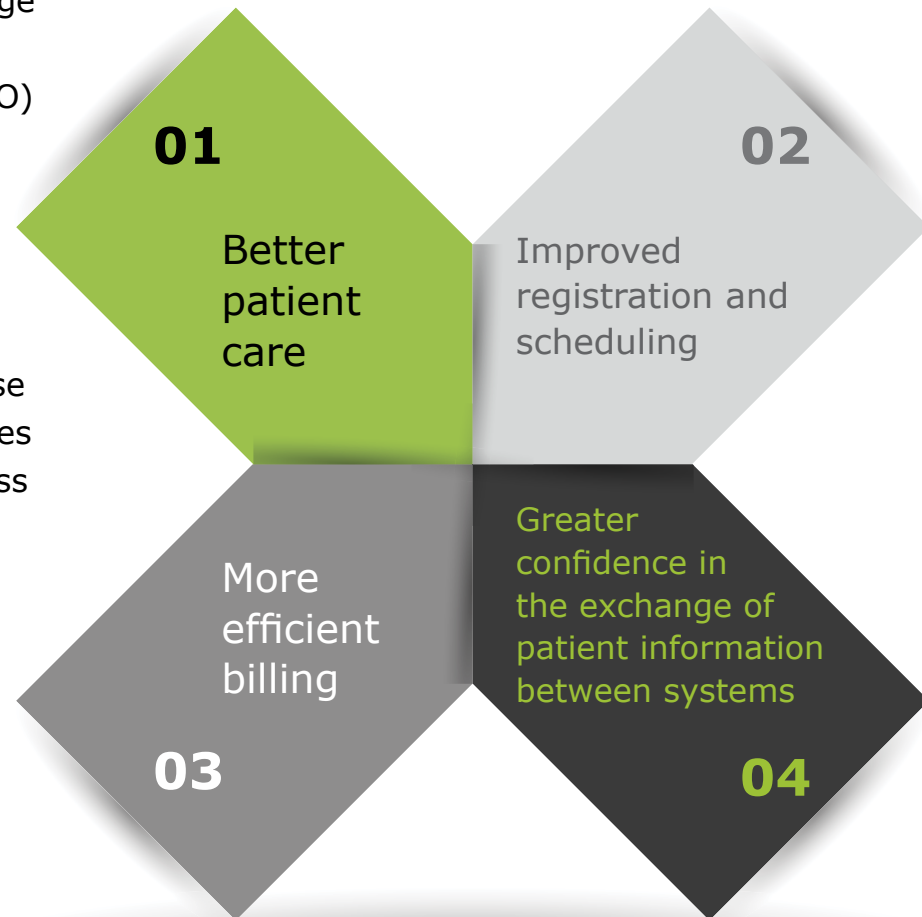


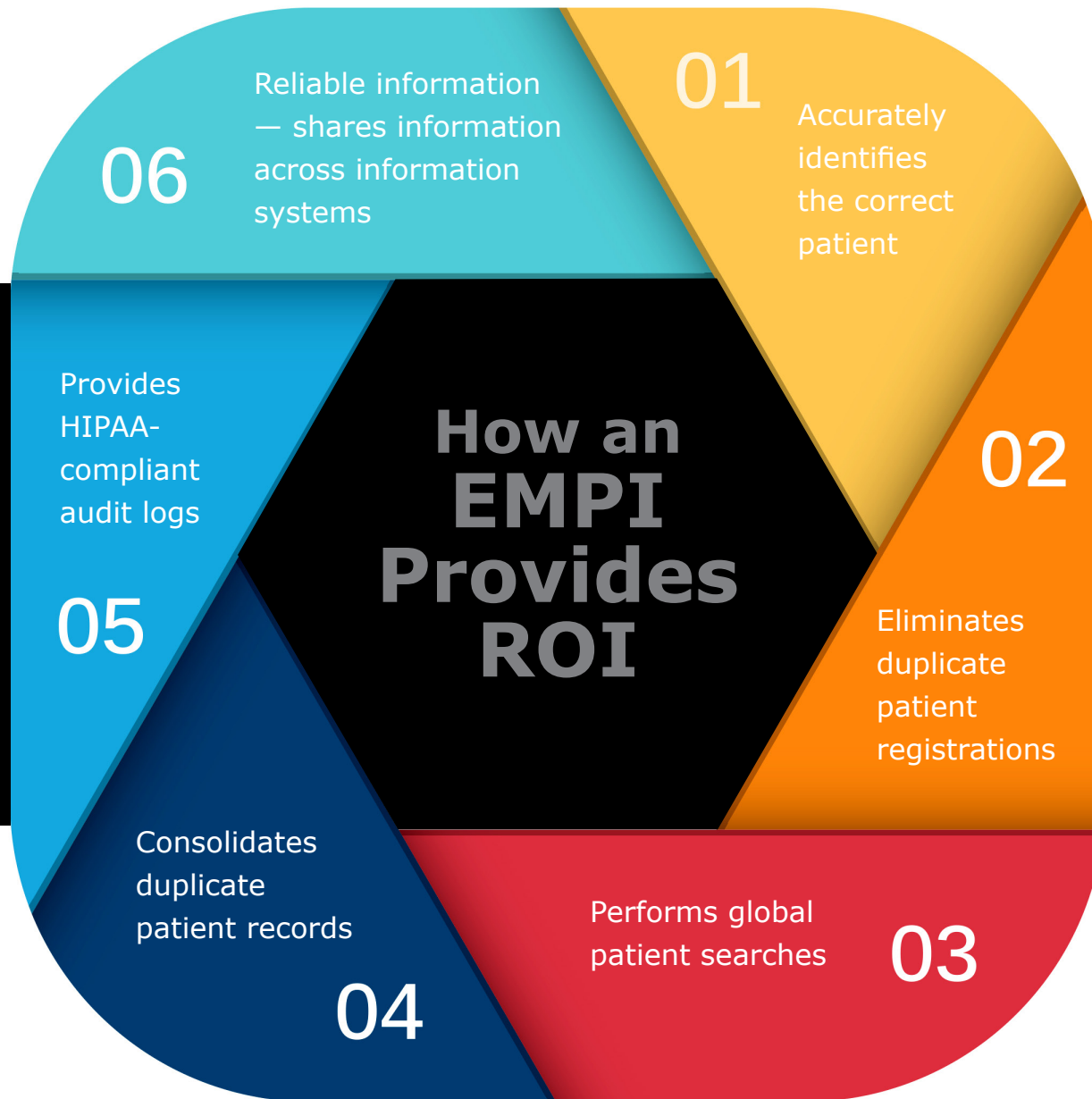
Patient Identity and EMPI

Multiple patient identifiers, duplicate patient records, and poor data quality cost hospitals millions in unnecessary tests, medical errors, fraud, billing errors and delays, and extra administrative work. When the data exchange requirements of connected care initiatives such as Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) and Health Information Exchanges (HIE), are added to the mix, the challenge — and importance — of accurate patient identification increases significantly.

Fortunately, there is a solution. An Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI) solution provides a unique identifier to refer to a patient across the healthcare enterprise. By ensuring that each patient is represented only once across all software systems, an EMPI provides a single, comprehensive view of the patient. With an EMPI solution, you can aggregate results from multiple systems to create one patient entity in order to make population health management decisions.

The results are:





EMPI Challenges

The goal of an EMPI is to create a complete, accurate data set across a healthcare organization. However, there are several challenges that often stand in the way:

Tuning the algorithms:

EMPI algorithms look at patient identifiers and decide based on a rule or weighed score whether records are a valid match. Incorrectly tuned algorithms can be a recipe for disaster, causing false positives where records are matched to the wrong patient or cause legitimate matches to be missed. You want to get it right the first time, tuned to your comfort zone.

Staffing shortages:

Hospitals often underestimate the staffing requirements to implement and manage an EMPI. It takes a lot of training, time, and expertise to manage and remediate or adjudicate records, especially when the EMPI isn't tuned properly.

Uncertainty over data governance:

Someone needs to identify key stakeholders and decision-makers, define policies and processes that are consistent across the enterprise, and make sure people follow them.

Interpreting the data:

The EMPI will reveal information previously under the radar, such as a social security number shared by two different people. The EMPI can help determine the rightful owner, and determine if this is a case of potential fraud or just a data entry blunder.



Getting Help:

EMPI expertise is often not available in-house, or IT staff is too busy with other pressing projects to correctly manage an EMPI system and its data, resulting in a higher rate of duplicate patient records. A cost-effective and less stressful option is engaging experienced experts to implement and manage your EMPI for you.

Depending on your needs, an EMPI expert can complement your existing staff or take on all EMPI-related activity.



EMPI Consulting Capabilities include:

- Assessing your EMPI needs: Evaluate your hospital's current EMPI solution, determine your current duplication rate, and recommend steps to meet your EMPI goals
- Helping define your EMPI strategy: Recommend EMPI software, determine configuration requirements, and develop a maintenance plan for ongoing patient data management
- Implementing the EMPI solution: Build and test interfaces to enable information-sharing, tune patient identity algorithms, clean up duplicate identities, and document data governance policies and processes
- EMPI training: Includes detecting and remediating duplicate records, tuning your algorithms, and interpreting the data
- Ongoing maintenance of patient identification data: Leveraging expertise with EMPI solutions and the health systems being connected

[Learn more](#) about EMPI Services

Connecting to an HIE (or Building Your Own)

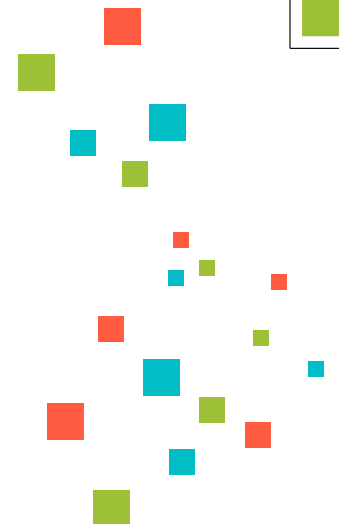
Another aspect of improving population health is connection to a Health Information Exchange (HIE) which gives all providers in a geographic region access to the complete patient record. HIEs will be the way that provider practices and health systems will share data, which means better-coordinated patient care, less duplicate testing, and better patient outcomes.

What Is the Right Exchange for Your Hospital?

Today, there are many models and business approaches to support electronic health information exchange. These include:

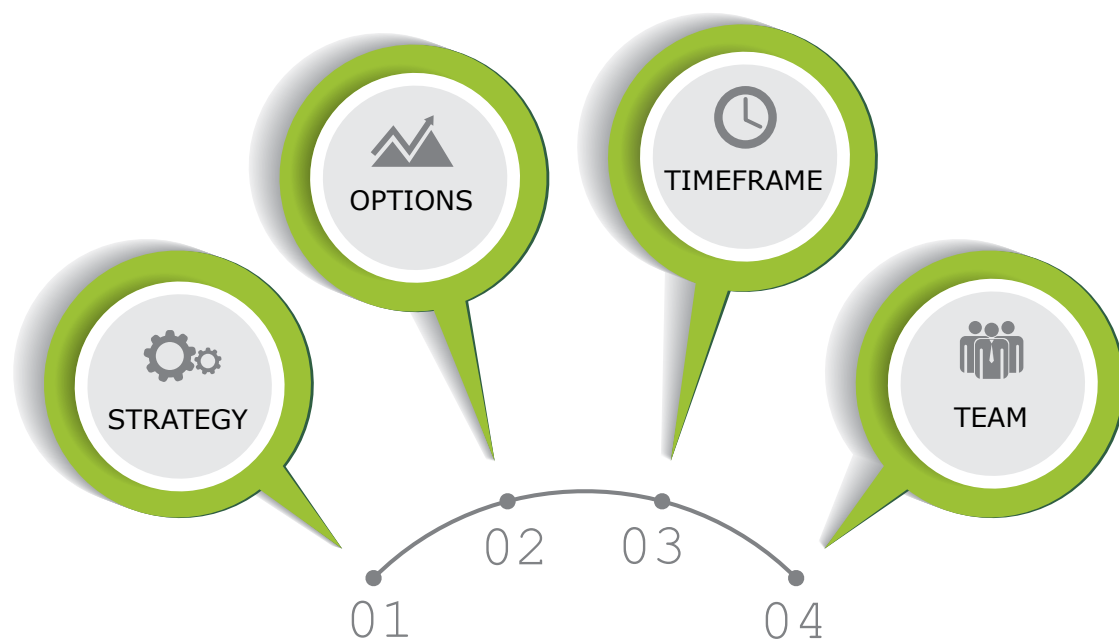
- Regional, local, or state nonprofit or government-sponsored exchange networks
- Local models offered by Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs)
- Exchange options offered by EHR vendors
- Services provided by national exchange networks
- Building your own private HIE to connect a group of hospitals

With so many exchange options, hospitals are often unsure which one is the right choice. Hospitals initially got started with HIEs to meet Meaningful Use requirements, but then found that their exchange didn't meet their needs. So, many hospitals are migrating to a different HIE.



HIE Challenges

As hospitals are considering creating or joining an HIE, these are the key challenges that they should plan to address for a successful implementation.



01 What is your HIE strategy? How do you want to access and use the data in an HIE? Do you have a good patient matching system in place?

03 What is the timeframe? What are the action steps, and how much time is needed for each?

02 What are the options? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? ([Read this blog post that summarizes the types of HIEs](#))

04 Who will handle the implementation? Do you have the right team in place?

Getting Help

Many hospitals find that it's more cost-effective to work with an outside partner with specialized HIE experience — someone familiar with the HIE landscape, who can evaluate the options, recommend an approach, and bring it to life.

Here are some of the ways that HIE professional services can make your life easier:

Assessing your needs — Evaluate your existing systems, establish your goals, and recommend the right course of action

Helping to define the right strategy — Define a plan to drive your desired outcomes and set the timeline and action steps needed to make connectivity a reality

Implementing the solution — Assist you at any step, including research, planning, and implementation

View the On-Demand Webcast: [Best Practices in Joining an HIE: How to Make Your Connection Work for You](#)

Population Health Analytics



Hospitals are becoming increasingly aware that the future of care quality and financial sustainability will rely on big data analytics. By examining and correlating massive volumes of clinical, financial, and operational data to obtain actionable insights, analytics solutions prevent errors, improve quality and efficiency, and enable more effective decisions.

These types of solutions enable improvements in many areas, from physician benchmarking to financial reporting, operational performance, and workforce management. However, the most important healthcare trend accelerating the adoption of analytics is population health, according to a [recent survey of CHIME executives](#).



A platform for analytics

Hospitals that have a platform for analytics and the infrastructure to support it can now leverage a new generation of opportunities for managing and improving population health:

- Identify, stratify, and segment at-risk populations
- Track variations in quality and efficiency to improve utilization of resources, optimize clinical value, and improve patient experience
- Measure overall population values and the ability to drill down to segments, provider groups, individual providers and individual patients
- Benchmark cost, quality, and efficiency against national norms
- Define effective healthcare strategies based on factors influencing cost, utilization, and quality in your population
- Help you design effective outreach programs and engagement initiatives that reflect your unique challenges and opportunities
- Objectively evaluate cost, quality, and utilization performance of programs or vendors



Addressing the Challenges

Getting Help

To make your life easier when getting started with analytics, consider outsourcing some or all of the work to a **Professional Services** team. Rather than try to do it all yourself, an experienced service provider can:

- Make sure you have the right technology in place
- Build the connectivity that captures the right data in real time
- Leverage in-depth knowledge of healthcare analytics to bring the right solution to life at your facility

Many healthcare CIOs are actively searching for products and services to build the foundation for analytics. However, for hospitals just getting started, acquiring the necessary resources and finding staff with the right expertise can be a challenge. In the CHIME survey previously noted, when asked to rank the biggest obstacles to the adoption of analytics, healthcare CIOs cited a lack of analytics expertise and resources to adopt the technology. The next biggest obstacle was dealing with the many other IT priorities they face.

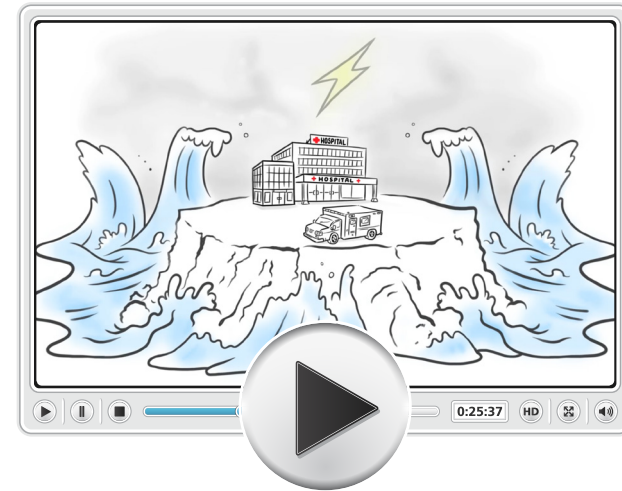
Another major concern was interoperability — the need to make data available from disparate systems to examine it as part of the analysis. A recent survey by [CDW Healthcare](#) found that two of the top challenges with implementing an analytics solution are combining data from different sources and achieving interoperability between technologies.

Some hospitals solve their interoperability challenges by implementing new interfaces. Others choose to solve the challenges of lack of resources, and competing IT priorities, by turning to outside resources for help.

About the Iatric Systems Professional Services Team

EHR technology, hundreds of specific functional solutions, and Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) are all bringing dramatic improvements to healthcare. Choosing and implementing the right technology at your healthcare organization may be putting a huge burden on your IT and project management teams. To effectively manage manpower and ensure success, you can turn to the highly-experienced Iatric Systems Professional Services team.

This team can help you plan, research, evaluate, and implement the right healthcare IT technologies as they are needed. Professional service recommendations are based on what is best for your organization and its systems, processes, best practices, and operations. We work with all EHRs and vendor systems to meet your specific needs.



Watch this 2-minute video to learn more.

[Request a meeting](#) with the Professional Services team today, or call **978-805-4100** for more information.

