Area of Focus: Data

Data

The State of Alaska has the data and technology systems in place to support the resources and funding of a Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program.

Objective 10.1: Optimize information technology investments to improve process efficiency and enable innovation.

Objective 10.2: Encourage a culture of data-driven decision making that includes data sharing, data analysis, and management to link support services across DOH and DFCS divisions and other departments.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT):
Tools and processes for data gathering and comprehensive management of health information.

Alaska Department of Health — Health Information Technologies[1]

Optimizing the infrastructure and policy frameworks surrounding Health Information Technology (HIT) and data sharing is expected to yield substantial returns on investments in terms of funding and resource allocation.

The integration of telemedicine, alongside remote delivery mechanisms for training and education, will increase access to healthcare services directly within an individual's preferred community. This approach minimizes the need for extensive travel, thus leading to a decrease in associated expenses.

The implementation of such technologies is crucial in Alaska, where geographical challenges pose a barrier to traditional healthcare delivery. Telemedicine bridges this gap by providing remote consultations, diagnostics, and treatment options, effectively bypassing the logistical hurdles of distance and accessibility. This is especially pertinent in rural or isolated communities, where healthcare facilities may be scarce or non-existent.

Moreover, the remote delivery of training and education for healthcare professionals via these technologies ensures a continuous enhancement of skills and knowledge, directly benefiting patient care. This mode of education is not only cost-effective but also ensures a broader reach, enabling professionals in even the most remote areas to stay abreast of the latest medical practices and technologies.

The broader implementation of HIT also facilitates a more efficient and effective data sharing system. This system enhances patient care through a more comprehensive understanding of patient histories and needs, allowing for more tailored and timely interventions. The digitization of health records and the integration of various health information systems play a critical role in this context, ensuring seamless data exchange among healthcare providers.

Furthermore, these advancements in HIT and telemedicine contribute significantly to preventive care, allowing for early detection and treatment of diseases, which in turn reduces the overall burden on the healthcare system. This not only translates into cost savings but also ensures a higher quality of life for individuals, as early intervention often leads to better health outcomes.

In summary, the strategic enhancement of infrastructure and policy related to HIT and data sharing is a critical step towards improving healthcare delivery in Alaska. By embracing telemedicine and remote educational technologies, the state can effectively address the unique challenges posed by its geography, enhance the quality of care, and achieve significant cost savings. This forward thinking approach not only benefits the healthcare system but also ensures that Alaskans receive timely and quality healthcare in their communities of choice.

Objective 10.1: Optimize information technology investments to improve process efficiency and enable innovation.

a. **Strategy:** Explore utilization of innovative distance technology for treatment and training to increase access and cost savings.

b. **Strategy:** Evaluate potential technologies and solutions.

c. **Strategy:** Modernize websites to ensure information is easily accessible and relevant to the audience.

d. **Strategy:** Ensure appropriate care is taken to protect patient privacy and security when evaluating projects.

Data

Objective 10.2: Encourage a culture of data-driven decision making that includes data sharing, data analysis, and management to link support services across DOH and DFCS divisions and other departments.

a. **Strategy:** Support innovation policies and collaborative planning efforts.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING (DDDM):

Aims to improve healthcare outcomes and system efficiency through the use of data to inform policy, drive innovation, and enhance patient care. This includes increasing the availability of data, empowering patients with access to their own health information, and using technology to facilitate secure data sharing between healthcare stakeholders. This strategy aims to improve quality, reduce costs, and prioritize patient-centered care.

Internally defined.

b. **Strategy:** Understand what data is available and streamline efficiencies.

c. **Strategy:** Ensure that data sharing and analysis efforts are accessible and relevant to stakeholder groups including patients, providers, DOH, DFCS, the Trust, and the Legislature.

d. **Strategy:** Ensure privacy and security while considering projects that include artificial intelligence components.

e. **Strategy:** Enact purpose-driven data collection and data analysis.

f. **Strategy:** Using the department's systems map, create a data-streamlining and data-sharing plan.

g. **Strategy:** Promote using Alaska-specific data whenever possible in addition to national data.

h. **Strategy:** Ensure specific data is collected, analyzed, and reported for the Scorecard to track progress and outcomes for the objectives and strategies of the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan.

ENDNOTES

1   Alaska Department of Health — Health Information Technologies.
     https://health.alaska.gov/HIT/Pages/default.aspx