



Communications Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Alaska, like the rest of the United States, faces challenges in addressing increasing health care costs, improving access to medical care, and ensuring and improving quality medical care for patients. Timely access to essential medical information by providers at the point of care is critical to good outcomes for the patients. The Alaska e_Health Initiative is working to address these challenges by promoting expansion of the use of Electronic Health Records by Alaska's medical providers and by establishing a statewide Electronic Health Record exchange network to support all of Alaska's health care delivery systems and to thereby provide critical information where and when it is needed.

In an effort to encourage wider adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and establish a Health Information Exchange (HIE) network in Alaska and throughout the United States, the national Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC) awarded a grant to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium in conjunction with Alaska eHealth Network to develop a comprehensive marketing and public relations plan. The plan is focused on promoting the network's benefit of exchanging critical medical information in a secure manner that ensures patient privacy. Toward that end, Alaska eHealth Network formed a communications advisory workgroup and queried its members for input as to how best to relay its message to stakeholders. The active workgroup contains members from several key groups, including physicians, patients, the state legislature, insurance companies and other payers, state and local government, medical records management, lawyers and project administrators.

Three key elements make up the Alaska eHealth Network:

The *Electronic Health Record (EHR)* is an electronic record of a patient's health information generated by the patient's encounters in any care-delivery setting, from hospitalizations to visits with the family physician. Included in this record are patient demographics, progress notes, problems, medication history, vital signs, past medical history, immunizations, allergies, laboratory data and radiology reports. Ideally, the EHR automates and streamlines the clinician's workflow, allowing providers access to accurate, up-to-date patient information at the point of care. The EHR has the ability to generate a complete record of a clinical patient encounter while simultaneously providing secure access to the record by multiple providers caring for the same patient. Most importantly, the EHR is designed to reduce medical errors and generate time and cost efficiencies.

The *Personal Health Record (PHR)* is another important component of the Electronic Health Record. The PHR is an Internet-based tool that allows patients to access and coordinate their lifelong health information, make appropriate parts of it available to those who need it, and gives the patient an ownership role in managing his/her medical record.

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Health Information Exchange (HIE) is the term used to describe the secure exchange of a patient's medical information among approved providers, payers and patients. Ideally, multiple providers caring for the same patient would share and exchange relevant information, thus providing that patient with streamlined, more efficient care. Billing information would be transmitted electronically, thereby reducing paperwork and administrative costs. HIE allows the patient's record to be stored and accessed from multiple locations.

EHRs and PHRs are already used to some degree in the state, usually in larger group practices. Several factors have slowed their large-scale adoption, however, the most notable being prohibitive cost and a lack of resources. In addition, hundreds of different EHR providers currently clog the marketplace, creating confusion about which company to use and concern about technology becoming obsolete. A recent unfunded federal mandate that stipulates that EHRs be in use by the year 2014 has created an additional sense of urgency.

Rationale

Widespread EHR adoption in Alaska offers numerous advantages. In broad terms, HIE and EHRs provide better quality health care by facilitating the timely and efficient exchange of appropriate information to patients and providers in a secure and private manner. In specific terms, this gives providers one standard mechanism for accessing any patient's health information, and gives patients an active role in managing their health care.

Adoption of EHR and HIE involves inherent challenges. While these challenges are manageable and can mostly be mitigated with proper education and training, providers and patients will understandably ask questions related to the adoption of EHRs. Issues of privacy and security stand at the forefront of both patient and provider concerns. In addition, providers question the cost and resources required to transition to EHRs and HIE, and patients may wonder how the system works and how difficult and time-consuming it will be for them to participate in it.

Strong public support exists for EHRs and HIE when they are thoroughly explained to stakeholders. An October 2005 public opinion survey, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, revealed that seven out of ten Americans support EHRs when issues of privacy and security are properly addressed.

Results from the same survey revealed that it is important when defining Health Information Exchange also to focus on the following issues: how it works, patient permission, who has access, and the benefits of electronic Health Information Exchange to both the patient and physician.

Clearly, the opportunity for wider EHR and PHR adoption in Alaska is improved when the benefits and risks are communicated in a *simple and compelling* manner. It is important to establish trust with the public as the communications plan is implemented. Therefore, all aspects of this plan address engaging the public to build confidence in the EHR process, especially *as it relates to privacy and security*. Once this trust is established, consumers and providers will be more likely to support and participate in an EHR effort.

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We must persuade Alaska stakeholders, via this communications plan, that EHRs, PHRs and HIE are safe and desirable developments in improving medical care.

Core Messages/Audiences

As stated above, consumers are enthusiastic about the idea of Electronic Health Records when certain issues are addressed, especially privacy and security. In an effort to get in front of the message, every element of the plan will incorporate the following core benefit messages.

Key Benefits:

Core Messages- Key Benefits of Electronic Health Records and Health Information Exchange

1. **Improve Quality of Care:** A network of Electronic Health Records ensures secure and timely access by providers to essential medical information when needed.
2. **Improve Health Safety:** Electronic Health Records and their exchange will reduce medical errors and unnecessary duplicate tests.
3. **Reduce Healthcare Costs:** EHRs will increase efficiencies through electronic charts and billing transmittals thereby decreasing paperwork and administrative costs.
4. **Access to Care:** An electronic health record network will be a strong physician recruitment tool, which will increase patient access to medical providers in Alaska.
5. **Improve Health of Alaskans:** Through the Personal Health Record, patients can choose to take an ownership role in their health care. A secure, online Personal Health Record will allow patients to review test results, prescription refills, and their medical records for accuracy.
6. **Increase Patient Privacy and Security in exchanging Medical Records:** The following safeguards will ensure greater privacy and security:
 - o Patient's personal medical information will be shared through the network only with their permission.
 - o Prior to releasing any personal information, the identity of anyone using the EHR system will be carefully confirmed to prevent unauthorized access or cases of mistaken identity.
 - o Patients will have Internet access to review their own health and medical history via a secure account.
 - o Patients will be able to review who has accessed their personal medical information through the Personal Health Record.
 - o Employers will not have access to the secure network used to exchange information between healthcare providers.
 - o Special selected categories of the medical record will be protected from exchange.

Real-life Applications:

Realizing the importance of identifying tangible, relevant benefits of EHRs to the patient, core messages also should emphasize the following real-life situations:

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- Healthcare providers having access to current information in an emergency medical situation
- Patients having access to their medical records when they are traveling out of state
- Allowing patients access to their medical records when they visit their provider
- Maintaining access to medical records during or after natural disasters when paper records may be lost or destroyed

Identifying other tangible relevant benefits for the primary audiences (patients, healthcare providers, and payers/insurers and employers) will be beneficial in developing core messages that emphasize real-life situations. These will be developed when the plan is enacted.

Audiences

In order for any EHR initiative to succeed, key identified groups must be educated about the effort, and, ideally, willing to lend their support or intensify their involvement in the process. The following key audiences are targeted in this plan:

- General public, with emphasis on its members' role as **patients**
- Healthcare providers, including physicians, midlevels and pharmacists
- Payers, insurers and employers

Because the general public audience is broad, it is further segmented to focus on the following subgroups:

- Patients in rural and urban areas
- Patients with access to technology and those who lack or don't utilize it
- Patients with chronic conditions and those considered essentially healthy
- Federal groups including tribal, military, and veterans

Plan Elements

Realizing the importance of positioning EHRs as beneficial to all residents, the plan aims to increase awareness and build support among the public at large, healthcare providers, and other identified stakeholders. The strategies and tactics outlined herein are designed to reach out to these groups.

It is because of the perceived complexity of the EHR/HIE issue that this communications plan takes a "back to basics" approach; only fundamental, tried-and-true public relations strategies and tactics are recommended.

The steps outlined below offer a budget-conscious method of achieving results that, if implemented, should further the goals of the Alaska EHR effort. The plan in this phase is not meant to contain an exhaustive list of specific ideas for each strategy; rather, it provides ***options for the communications advisory workgroup*** to review and select for further exploration and refinement. At that point, specific budgets will be assigned to each task.

Primary Objective

To convey to Alaskans the features, benefits and overall advantages of secure Electronic Health Records, Health Information Exchange, and Personal Health Records in order to generate support for their widespread adoption in the state.

Three Primary Goals

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|---------------|---|
| Goal 1 | To educate Alaskan consumers about what Electronic Health Records mean to them on a personal level and how their healthcare can improve as a result |
| Goal 2 | To communicate to healthcare providers how broader use of Electronic Health Records can make their practices and institutions more time and cost efficient and improve the care they provide to patients |
| Goal 3 | To communicate to employers and insurers/payers the value of an Electronic Health Record network to improve the quality of healthcare and increase employee productivity while realizing cost savings in healthcare delivery |
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Three Primary Strategies

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|-------------------|---|
| Strategy 1 | Generate awareness of the Electronic Health Record/ Health Information Exchange/Personal Health Record story via editorial coverage |
| Strategy 2 | Launch a targeted outreach effort geared toward healthcare providers and other crucial stakeholders |
| Strategy 3 | Conduct targeted outreach to payers/insurers and employers with appropriate emphasis on the benefits of utilizing the Personal Health Record |

Strategy 1 **Generate awareness of the HIE/EHR/PHR story via editorial coverage**

Tactic 1 **Create a unified, identifiable brand for the Alaska EHR effort**

Rationale Several entities in the state are working toward EHR adoption, which can cause confusion among the media and the public as to who is the primary authority on the subject. A unified brand will streamline communications and improve understanding of the issue.

Audience General public, local media

Message The proponents of EHR in Alaska are organized and united in their efforts to improve healthcare in Alaska

Action Steps

1. Retain the services of an advertising agency/graphic designer and identify participants in the branding process
 2. Convene participants either in-person or electronically and clarify the process and goals for the new identity
 3. Work with the selected designer to develop a *brand/logo/tagline* based on members' suggestions
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Tactic 2 **Develop a comprehensive press kit and impactful marketing materials**

Action Steps

1. Once the new brand is finalized, assemble the following:
 - Press release announcing the new brand and providing updates on the EHR effort in Alaska
 - Fact sheet specific to EHRs and HIE, including how the technology works
 - FAQs related to privacy and security concerns with comprehensive information addressing each issue
 - History of the various groups' work toward EHR adoption, especially the HISPC grant work
 - EHR implementation timeline
 - Lists and bio information for committee members/key stakeholders
 - Story ideas, including the Personal Health Record concept
 - Case studies from other states already utilizing EHRs successfully

- Contact information
 - 2. Distribute press kit to Alaska media and use the distribution as an opportunity for a top-line, informal briefing with reporters
 - 3. Update the kit when necessary and post to a designated Web site
 - 4. Determine which marketing materials (i.e. brochures, Web site, leave-behinds, etc.) are critical to the local effort's success and establish a timeline and budget for their creation.
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Tactic 3 Conduct media outreach and pitch the EHR story

Action Steps

1. Armed with the new press kit, aggressively pursue coverage of the EHR story in the state's most influential media, including the Anchorage Daily News, Channel 2 News, Alaska Public Radio, Fairbanks and Juneau media outlets, as well as rural news outlets.
 2. Periodically identify fresh story angles and pitch reporters on providing updates to their readers/viewers/listeners.
 3. Position EHR spokespeople as local sources of expertise on electronic privacy.
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Tactic 4 Submit guest editorials for statewide publication

Action Steps

1. Once the press kit is complete, designate stakeholders who can pen opinion pieces.
 2. Pitch editors of key publications on running an EHR editorial, i.e. the Anchorage Daily News' *Compass* piece.
 3. Work with agency to polish and edit pieces written by designated stakeholders.
 4. Submit editorials for publication.
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Tactic 5 Schedule editorial board meetings

Action Steps

1. Once the new identity is finalized, designate stakeholders who can speak about the EHR effort with editors.
2. Schedule and conduct editorial briefings.
3. Conduct any follow up (with promised information) that results from meetings.
4. Pitch editors on penning a favorable editorial as a result of these meetings.
5. Schedule follow-up meetings as necessary.

Tactic 6 Schedule appearances on important local talk radio programs

Action Steps

1. Designate stakeholders who can speak about the EHR effort with local talk radio hosts.
 2. Schedule and conduct appearances on local shows.
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Tactic 7 Produce local Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Action Steps

1. Decide which messages to incorporate into PSAs for radio and TV.
 2. Work with a design team to produce and distribute PSAs statewide.
- Note: The eHealth Initiative's Web site offers broadcast-ready radio PSAs free to its members. If the team elects to use them, it will represent a substantial cost savings.
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Tactic 8 Create a speakers bureau and schedule appearances

Action Steps

1. Incorporate key messages into a PowerPoint presentation, or update an existing slide deck.
2. Schedule speaking engagements with influential groups and organizations, i.e. the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary clubs, Commonwealth North, etc.

Strategy 2 **Launch a targeted outreach effort geared toward healthcare providers, including private and smaller practices, and other crucial stakeholders**

Tactic 1 **Work with local professional provider organizations to enlist the support of their members**

Rationale The Alaska medical community is active in various professional organizations

Audience Physicians, midlevels, pharmacists, medical office managers

Message Providers can be assured that adopting Electronic Health Records will increase office efficiencies, and improve healthcare outcomes through having critical information at the point of care. More detailed benefits are outlined under Tactic 2.

Providers have been slow to adopt EHRs due to several overriding concerns. A number of efforts are underway to mitigate these concerns, including the following:

1. The cost of EHR adoption will be reduced through a grant program for qualified providers. (program and amounts dependent upon securing funding)
2. The difficulty of selecting an EHR system will be lessened by The Alaska e-Health Initiative's program, which begins with the selection of several viable and sustainable EHR suppliers, that meet federal certification and other national standards, for providers to choose from. This will insure that the provider does not invest in outdated technology or short-lived companies.
3. A Health Information Exchange organization will offer the technology and agreements to allow the secure exchange of Electronic Health Records between providers, labs, hospitals, payers, and other medical entities involved in the delivery of patient care.

Action Steps

1. Identify local professional provider organizations to target, i.e.:
 - Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA)
 - Alaska Academy of Physician's Assistants
 - Alaska Nurse Practitioners Association
 - Alaska Pharmacists Association
 - Alaska Physicians and Surgeons
 - Alaska Medical Group Management Association

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- Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Family Practice
 - Alaska American College of Physicians
 - Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association
 - Others to be identified
2. Arrange meetings with key representatives from each group and establish speaking opportunities at each organization's annual meeting.
 3. Purchase display booths at each organization's annual meeting.
 4. Explore additional partnership opportunities and identify champions in each organization.
 5. Pursue inclusion of the local EHR effort in each organization's publication, (i.e. ASMA's *Heartbeat*) Web site or electronic correspondence with its members.
 6. For groups with a legislative agenda, work with designated members to encourage them to include the Alaska e-Health Initiative in their lobbying efforts. For groups that already support the legislative effort, identify methods of intensifying their involvement, i.e. ask their members to write letters/emails to their lawmakers asking them to support the effort, or request to be included in legislative receptions, etc.
 7. Identify local providers who can write op-ed pieces for statewide publication.
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Tactic 2

Meet with individual providers, including those in small and private practices, to explain the EHR effort and garner support

Rationale One-on-one meetings with providers will provide the opportunity to explain the benefits of EHR and uncover any concerns, giving providers a voice in the process.

Audience Health care providers, especially those in small and private practices.

Message Providers stand to benefit from widespread EHR adoption in several important ways, including:

1. Better patient care/satisfaction.
2. Critical electronic information and alerts to aid in diagnosis and treatment decisions.
3. Less chance of medical errors.
4. Facilitation of essential clinical trials.
5. Promotion of standards of care.
6. Improved billing accuracy and office efficiency.
7. Improved practice/clinic profitability.
8. Reduction in duplicate services and tests.
9. Improved safety in hospitals/in-patient setting.
10. Compliance with HIPAA requirements.

11. Quick access to back-up documentation for insurance claim inquiries, audits, and malpractice allegations.

Action Steps

1. Identify key providers/practices and schedule one-on-one meetings with them, via either scheduled appointments, lunchtime presentations or, in the case of rural providers, phone or email correspondence.
2. Gather feedback from these meetings and incorporate relevant messages into marketing materials.

Tactic 3 Create a volunteer advisory group made up of a broad spectrum of healthcare providers

Rationale The local medical community will be more likely to support a local EHR effort if its opinions and ideas are being incorporated into the process

Audience Health care providers

Message The EHR effort is being advised by a group of credible peers who support the Initiative

Action Steps

1. Identify key providers, including any outspoken critics of EHRs, and approach them with the idea of serving on a provider advisory group.
2. Hold meetings on an as-needed basis to provide updates on EHR's progress in Alaska while asking for suggestions and feedback.
3. Incorporate appropriate ideas into the EHR effort's strategic plan and publicize newsworthy results to the media and the local medical community.

Tactic 4 Create marketing materials designed for provider use

Rationale Research shows that patients overwhelmingly say they trust doctors the most for information about secure electronic Health Information Exchange; physician support is critical to success.

Audience Doctors and their patients

Message Physicians are delivering the EHR message because they believe in its importance to their patients' healthcare

Action Steps

1. Develop talking points for physicians to use when explaining EHR/HIE to their patients.
2. Once developed, design and produce convenient laminated talking points cards for physicians to keep for easy reference.
3. Design and produce posters detailing the benefits of EHR/HIE for display in clinics, exam rooms or other appropriate venues.
4. Make other marketing materials available to physician offices to use at their discretion, i.e. brochures explaining the benefits of EHR/HIE in their waiting/exam rooms, etc.

Tactic 5a

Develop communication tools designed to reach stakeholders in rural markets

Rationale The Alaska EHR effort is statewide, including rural areas; some messages aimed at a rural audience will differ from those targeting urban populations

Audience Health care providers, general public, media

Message Rural patients have specific interests related to their healthcare. EHRs, PHRs and HIE offer advantages to all patients as outlined in the core benefits, on page 5, and the general messages for both urban and rural stakeholders under Tactic 5b. In addition, the following, more specific messages offer these advantages:

1. Improve the quality of care by making Electronic Health Records available to providers in multiple locations and/or specialties.
2. Facilitate secure provider-patient interactions when it is not feasible to visit a provider in person.
3. Provide comprehensive personal health information, included in the patient's PHR, whether care is received at the village clinic, regional facility, or the city hospital.
4. Provide specialty medical knowledge and diagnostic or medical services at local or remote locations through important information in the EHR and quicker contact with specialists in other locations.
5. Reduce paperwork burden associated with patients receiving care from various medical facilities and providers.
6. Increase security of records and allow patient to monitor access.

Action Steps

1. Work with the various Alaska Native corporations and the Alaska Native Medical Center to streamline efforts already underway at moving to an EHR system.
2. Target rural publications for coverage of the EHR issue or submit editorial pieces for publication.
3. Work with the Alaska Federation of Natives to develop a presence at its annual convention.
4. Approach GCI with the idea of co-promoting its massive effort to make every village wireless by 2011. Pitch the idea of promoting EHRs/PHRs as an ideal platform from which to announce its commitment to rural parts of the state.
5. Make a concerted effort to meet in-person with legislators representing rural parts of the state to make sure they understand the issue and can explain its benefits to their constituents.
6. Identify and approach key Native and rural leaders with the idea of serving as ambassadors to their communities.
7. Hire professionals with expertise in communicating effectively with rural populations (i.e. Aurora Consulting) to further develop strategies for reaching these markets with appropriate messages.
8. Hold community meetings to educate residents about EHRs, PHRs, and HIE.

Tactic 5b

Develop communication tools designed to reach stakeholders in urban markets

Rationale The Alaska EHR effort is statewide, and messages aimed at major population centers will be broader in scope than those aimed at rural residents

Audience General public

Message Patients in urban areas stand to benefit from Electronic Health Records in specific ways, including the core benefits found on page 5, plus the following general messages for both urban and rural stakeholders:

1. Greater access to and control over their own health records through Personal Health Records will allow:
 - The ability to ask more informed questions of their physicians.
 - Confirm information provided by a physician/nurse during a visit or phone call.
 - Help them better understand choices in treatment options.
2. Providers will have quick access to complete medical information about the patient, which will result in better diagnoses and outcomes for the patient.
3. The paperwork burdens for patients and providers will be reduced, and duplicate, unnecessary testing eliminated.

Action Steps

1. Develop displays using the new brand/logo/tagline and display them at health fairs across the state. Distribute marketing materials designed for a mass consumer audience (perhaps the same brochures available in providers' waiting rooms) at these events.
2. Create displays at other large-scale gatherings or events, i.e. the Alaska State Fair, etc.
3. Produce bus signs for display on the back/side of Anchorage's People Mover busses.
4. Develop branded java jackets (cardboard latte holders) for use at local coffee shops.
5. Explore the possibility of utilizing print advertising when camera-ready art is available (the e-Health Initiative's Web site makes print ads of various sizes and colors available free to its members).

Tactic 6a

Develop communication tools designed to reach technologically sophisticated stakeholders

Rationale Patients most likely to first adopt EHRs and PHRs will likely be tech savvy

Audience General public, media

Action Steps

- Develop a professional, comprehensive Web site where members of the public and the media can access information on the Alaska EHR effort. Ideally, the Web site would include:
 - History and background information on the Alaska e-Health Initiative
 - Basic definition of EHR/HIE/PHRs and how they work, including graphics and/or flow charts.
 - FAQs addressing the most common questions and concerns.
 - An image of a sample EHR juxtaposed with a photo of an overstuffed paper-chart storage room to illustrate the simplicity of the EHR system
 - Testimonials from key healthcare providers explaining how their patients' care is improved with EHRs.
 - Sections specific to providers, the general public and media with information on each group's main issues.
 - Links to other relevant Web sites.
 - Contact information and "how to get involved" information.

Tactic 6b **Develop communication tools designed to reach stakeholders who either do not have access to, or have a limited interest in technology**

Rationale Some critical stakeholders either do not have access to the Internet or do not use it

Audience General public

Message Even if patients are not enthusiastic about the improved technology offered by Electronic Health Records, their wider use can benefit them in the following ways:

1. Reduction in medical errors.
2. Reduction in out-of-pocket healthcare costs.
3. Easier, more accurate pharmacy transactions.
4. Improved correspondence with healthcare agencies like Medicare or Medicaid.
5. Reduced paperwork burdens associated with visiting new providers.

Action Steps

1. Develop a direct mail campaign targeting specific demographics (i.e. the elderly) to educate them about the EHR effort, especially PHR, and how they stand to benefit from it.
 2. Create informational displays for use in community centers, libraries, public health clinics and other high-traffic areas where people tend to gather.
 3. Identify demographic groups who tend not to have access to or don't trust technology and enlist the help of their leaders to communicate effectively with their members.
 4. Produce an insert for distribution in the *Anchorage Daily News* or other statewide publications.
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Tactic 7a **Conduct targeted outreach geared specifically toward chronic disease patients**

Rationale Patients with chronic conditions stand to benefit greatly from improved health record accuracy, and may also desire to manage their own healthcare more actively via PHRs

Audience General public, media

Message Patients with chronic conditions stand to benefit from wider use of EHRs and particularly in the use of PHRs in the following ways:

1. Organized personal health information in the Personal Health Record will reduce or eliminate the individual's burden of facilitating the exchange of information between providers.
2. Better access to health records will allow patients to monitor their progress and check for errors, including potential medication interactions and contraindications.
3. Patients' access to their Personal Health Records will improve their ability to manage their own medical conditions through seeing and recognizing trends in their Personal Health Record, being able to ask better questions of their providers, and having access to all of their providers' instructions and recommendations in one place.

Action Steps

1. Partner with the local chapters of organizations affiliated with chronic conditions (i.e. the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the Alaska AIDS Assistance Association, etc.) to reach their members with the EHR/HIE/PHR message. For example, ask to include information with an emphasis on how their members' healthcare can improve in any electronic communication, newsletters, etc.
2. Identify methods for creating a presence at these organizations' large-scale events and fundraisers, i.e. auctions, bike rides, formal dinners, etc.
3. Once the Alaska e-Health Initiative Web site is launched, ask these organizations to link to the site from their own.
4. Partner with providers, clinics and practices that serve patients with chronic conditions (i.e. diabetes, heart disease, AIDS, mental illness, cancer, etc.) and identify ways of involving their patients in the EHR effort.

Tactic 7b **Conduct targeted outreach geared specifically toward healthy patients**

Rationale Healthy patients may not consider EHRs to be very useful to them because of their overall good health

Audience General public

Message EHRs benefit everyone, including patients who require only an annual check-up, in the following ways:

- Ensuring the safety/accuracy of health records in an emergency
- Allowing access to medical information while traveling

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- Providing easy refills of prescription medications
- Ensuring survival of records during a natural disaster or other catastrophe
- Allowing caregivers (who have been given permission) to access medical records, and monitor them for accuracy
- Patients can monitor their records for billing errors or identity theft issues.

Action Steps

1. Create marketing tools (brochures, posters, etc.) designed to address issues of universal interest. Distribute these materials in primary care provider offices, clinics and practices.
2. Dedicate a portion of the Web site to address this issue, i.e. a "Why EHRs benefit everyone" section.

Tactic 8 **Conduct outreach to appropriate local consumer groups (AARP, AKPIRG) and ask them to encourage their members to support an Alaska EHR effort**

Rationale	Consumer groups are credible providers of information to their members
Audience	Members of respective groups
Message	The Alaska e-Health Initiative enjoys broad support from a range of consumer groups who promote the rights and interests of their members, which include the desire for improved, more efficient healthcare delivery and better access to providers.

Action Steps

1. Work with current supporters (i.e. AARP) to develop additional strategies for getting their membership to support an Alaska EHR effort, i.e. write letters to the editor in support of EHR's widespread adoption, or include a news item with a call-to-action component in the AARP Bulletin's Regional News.
2. Approach AKPIRG and ask for its support. Once secured, take advantage of AKPIRG's media muscle to pitch a sidebar story on how EHRs and PHRs benefit Alaska consumers.
3. Identify other consumer groups (i.e. AAA relative to the issue of accessibility of records while traveling) whose participation in an EHR initiative would be appropriate, and approach them for strategies of how best to marshal their memberships' resources.
4. Include letters of support from willing consumer groups in media and legislative materials.
5. Add links on consumer groups' websites to the Alaska e-Health Initiative's website and to the AEHRI's website for the consumer groups' websites.

Tactic 9 Conduct outreach to federal groups (tribal, military, VA)

Rationale Many Alaska federal groups are responsible for the healthcare of their members

Audience Members of respective groups and their administrators

Message It is in the best interest of federal groups to support an Electronic Health Record effort because:

1. Their members' health will improve through use of the Personal Health Record by giving them an active role in their care and to provide access to health information when away from home.
2. A more efficient system will reduce healthcare costs for both the federal groups and their members.
3. Federal group members are more likely to hold their respective healthcare organizations in high regard if they perceive that steps are being taken to improve their care and quality of life.
4. Frequent moves make electronic access to records very valuable.

Action Steps

1. Work with various federal groups' healthcare administrators to identify how the Alaska e-Health Initiative can meet their members' needs.
2. Identify champions within each organization that can assist in delivering the EHR message to their respective decision and policy-makers.
3. Ask that information about the features and benefits of the Electronic Health Record , Personal Health Record and secure Health Information Exchange be included in each federal group's communication with its members, i.e. newsletters, emails, etc.

Strategy 3 **Conduct targeted outreach to payers/insurers and employers with appropriate emphasis on the benefits of utilizing the Personal Health Record**

Tactic 1 **Enlist support from the state, including the Alaska Legislature and the Governor's office/administration**

Rationale The Alaska EHR effort requires funding, which the state can help provide. As a major payer, the state has a vested interest in the benefits provided by Electronic Health Records and Personal Health Records

Audience Legislators, the Governor, and her administration

Message The Alaska e-Health Initiative is worth supporting financially for the following reasons:

1. It will reduce costs associated with inefficiencies in administering and delivering medical care.
2. It will improve the healthcare and quality of life for all Alaskans by reducing medical errors and improving medical outcomes.
3. It will help recruit and attract new healthcare providers to the state, thereby increasing access to providers.
4. Through Personal Health Records, employees will have more control over their own healthcare resulting in improved overall health. The small annual contribution per Alaskan for Personal Health Records will create a sustainable EHR network that will benefit all Alaskans.

Action Steps

1. Designate one or two stakeholders as the primary contacts on the EHR issue and register as lobbyists in Juneau. Travel to Juneau during the session on an as-needed basis and meet with legislators and/or staff to provide information on and promote the EHR effort.
2. Write and distribute to legislators and the Governor's administration a monthly (or some other time interval) email newsletter with updates on the Alaska EHR effort.
3. Work with legislative champions to develop strategies for communicating effectively with the legislature and the administration.
4. Continue working with the Alaska Health Care Strategies Planning Council and encourage its members to ask for support for the Alaska e-Health Initiative from their respective constituencies.

Tactic 2 **Conduct outreach to large employers**

Rationale Support from large employers is critical to the EHR effort's success

Audience Human resource administrators at major employers and employees at those companies

Message Electronic Health Records and Personal Health Records are worth investing in for the following reasons:

1. Patient care will improve and ultimately create healthier employees.
2. Productivity will improve as a result of healthier, happier employees who miss fewer days of work.
3. Morale will receive a boost from employees who feel as if their company is genuinely interested in providing them with the most advanced tools available to improve their health and the health of their families.
4. Employees with chronic health conditions are apt to stay on the job longer and file for disability less often when their healthcare is being managed effectively.
5. Employees with Personal Health Records become more active in managing their health, which translates to healthier, happier employees, and reduced healthcare costs.
6. Potential reduction in insurance costs due primarily to increased efficiencies and elimination of duplicate or unnecessary tests or procedures.

Action Steps

1. Create marketing materials designed to sell the benefits of EHRs and PHRs to employers, i.e. brochures and leave-behinds containing messages about improved patient and employee health, fewer sick days, etc.
2. Schedule appointments with the HR administrators of major employers (Carrs/Safeway, the state of Alaska, Providence, BP, Fred Meyer, etc.) and lobby their support for statewide EHR adoption.
3. Participate in any large employer's "Benefits Day" or fairs when employees visit booths from various vendors to learn about their healthcare plan.
4. Create an animated computer demonstration showing how an average employee/patient might navigate a PHR and become more engaged in his/her healthcare as a result. Post it to the Web site and use it for presentations and meetings.
5. Include testimonials from patients/employees/providers who have used PHRs and can speak to their convenience and effectiveness in any meetings with payers and employers. Post to the Web site.
6. Pitch business media on covering the PHR story with the angle of employers using innovative new methods to keep employees healthy.

Tactic 3

Conduct outreach to insurance companies

Rationale Support from insurance companies is critical to the Alaska e-Health Initiative's success

Audience Administrators of major insurance companies (Premera, Aetna, etc.)

Message EHRs and PHRs will improve patient care and ultimately *reduce healthcare costs* by:

1. Streamlining communication between providers' offices and insurance companies including timely processing of insurance claims through standardized claim reporting
2. Eliminating manual and cumbersome claims processing that are costly to the whole system
3. Increasing ease and efficiency of access to records when appropriate
4. Ensuring that practitioners and patients know in advance what will be covered by a patient's insurance plan.
5. Giving patients the tools to help manage and monitor their own healthcare, resulting in healthier patients and, subsequently, lower medical costs
6. Reduced Cost of Care:
 - a. Decrease in long-term care costs resulting from a healthier population utilizing screening reminders and best practice alerts for wellness management
 - b. Reduction in duplicate clinical tests
 - c. Fewer medication errors and poor outcomes resulting from poor access to patient clinical data
7. Reduction in numbers of appeals from patients to insurers

Action Steps

1. Create marketing materials designed to sell the benefits of EHRs and PHRs to payers, i.e. brochures and leave-behinds containing messages about improved patient and employee health, reduced paperwork, etc.
2. Compile any existing research findings and/or statistics showing how use of EHRs and PHRs can reduce expensive medical errors, streamline administrative work and, ultimately, reduce healthcare costs.
3. Conduct one-on-one meetings with major insurance companies' HR administrators and sell the benefits of widespread EHR adoption. Use these meetings to assess what the companies need in order to support the local effort.
4. Create a section of the Web site designed for payers with information (graphs, charts, etc.) showing improved patient outcomes and cost savings realized by EHR/PHR use.

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5. Include payers in all aspects of the outreach effort, including pitches to the media, workgroups and meetings, lobbying the state legislature, etc.

Evaluation

In order to judge whether the plan is successful, some form of measurement is necessary. Ideally, polling would be conducted before and after the plan is implemented to see how public attitudes about EHR/HIE/PHRs change as a result of the outreach effort. Barring that, several other methods may be used to monitor progress:

- Increase in the number of providers willing to explore using EHRs
- Increase in the number of providers willing to speak up in favor of the EHR effort
- Increase in the number of visitors to any Web sites created for the EHR communications effort
- Noticeable amount of correspondence from constituents to their legislators in support of EHRs
- Substantial, positive media coverage across the state with a positive return-on-investment dollar amount
- Inclusion of the EHR pilot program in the state budget
- Increased use of PHRs in the state
- Payer participation in an EHR program

TWO-YEAR COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET

YEAR ONE BUDGET ESTIMATE

STRATEGY 1: GENERATE AWARENESS OF HIE/HER/PHR STORY VIA EDITORIAL COVERAGE

	per month	per year
PRESS KIT (PDF)		\$5,000.00
EDITORIAL MEETING (x1)		\$3,000.00
INTERVIEW/WRITE/EDIT TESTIMONIALS		\$5,000.00
OUTREACH – MEDIA	\$2,150.00	\$25,800.00
RADIO TALK SHOW APPEARANCES	\$300.00	\$3,600.00
SPEAKERS BUREAU	\$1,150.00	\$13,800.00
CREATE BRAND (done)		COMPLETE
PSA – RADIO/TV – PRODUCE AND SCHEDULE		\$80,000.00
DISPLAY – SPECIFIC TO GENERAL PUBLIC		\$1,750.00
DISPLAY – LONG-STANDING FOR PUBLIC SPACES		\$1,750.00
PRINT ADVERTISING		\$65,000.00
INSERT – ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS		\$22,500.00

STRATEGY 2: LAUNCH A TARGETED OUTREACH EFFORT GEARED TOWARD HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS, INCLUDING PRIVATE AND SMALLER PRACTICES AND OTHER CRUCIAL STAKEHOLDERS

	per month	per year
IDENTIFY PROFESSIONAL PROVIDER LOCATIONS		\$575.00
COORDINATE CALENDAR OF EVENTS		\$3,000.00
CREATE / COORDINATE A VOLUNTARY ADVISORY GROUP		TBD
CULTURAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING w/ Aurora Consulting		\$2,000.00
OUTREACH – AK NATIVE CORPORATIONS		\$5,750.00
OUTREACH – COMMUNITY MEETINGS (x2)		\$13,500.00
OUTREACH – CHRONIC DISEASE PATIENTS		\$5,750.00
FUNDRAISERS / EVENTS (x4)		TBD
OUTREACH – FEDERAL GROUPS		\$5,750.00
MAINTAIN VOLUNTARY ADVISORY GROUP	\$1,150.00	\$13,800.00
OUTREACH – LOCAL CONSUMER GROUPS	\$1,150.00	\$13,800.00
WRITE/DISTRIBUTE E-newsletter	\$1,500.00	\$18,000.00
JAVA JACKETS		\$2,500.00

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COLLATERAL – HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS (2500 qty)		\$2,278.00
COLLATERAL – RURAL COMMUNITIES (2500 qty)		\$2,278.00
COLLATERAL – URBAN COMMUNITIES (2500 qty)		\$2,278.00
COLLATERAL – PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS (2500 qty)		\$2,278.00
DISPLAY – SPECIFIC TO INDUSTRY EVENTS		\$1,750.00
WEB SITE – CREATE AND MAINTAIN		\$7,200.00
ANIMATED COMPUTER DEMONSTRATION		\$3,200.00

STRATEGY 3: CONDUCT TARGETED OUTREACH TO PAYERS/INSURERS AND EMPLOYERS WITH APPROPRIATE EMPHASIS ON THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING THE PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD

	per month	per year
OUTREACH – RURAL LEGISLATORS		\$5,750.00
DESIGNATE AND REGISTER LOBBYIST/SPOKESPERSON (x1)		\$250.00
COORDINATE LOBBYIST TRIPS TO JUNEAU (x1)		\$6,750.00
OUTREACH – HR ADMINSTRATORS / MAJOR EMPLOYERS		\$5,750.00
OUTREACH – BENEFITS DAYS		\$5,750.00
OUTREACH – MAJOR INSURANCE COMPANIES		\$5,750.00
COLLATERAL – LARGE BUSINESSES / HR ADMINISTRATORS (2500 qty)		\$2,278.00
COLLATERAL – INSURANCE COMPANIES (2500 qty)		\$2,278.00

EVALUATION

	per month	per year
STATEWIDE POLL - BASELINE		\$20,000.00

ADMINISTRATIVE

	per month	per year
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$2,175.00	\$26,100.00

TOTAL (YEAR ONE) \$413,543

YEAR TWO BUDGET ESTIMATE

STRATEGY 1: GENERATE AWARENESS OF HIE/EHR/PHR STORY VIA EDITORIAL COVERAGE

	per month	per year
EDITORIAL MEETING (x1)		\$3,000.00
WRITE/DISTRIBUTE GUEST EDITORIALS (x3)		\$4,500.00
OUTREACH – MEDIA	\$2,150.00	\$25,800.00
RADIO TALK SHOW APPEARANCES	\$300.00	\$3,600.00
SPEAKERS BUREAU	\$1,150.00	\$13,800.00

STRATEGY 2: LAUNCH A TARGETED OUTREACH EFFORT GEARED TOWARD HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS, INCLUDING PRIVATE AND SMALLER PRACTICES AND OTHER CRUCIAL STAKEHOLDERS

	per month	per year
COORDINATE CALENDAR OF EVENTS		\$3,000.00
OUTREACH - AK NATIVE CORPORATIONS		\$5,750.00
OUTREACH - COMMUNITY MEETINGS (x2)		\$13,500.00
OUTREACH - CHRONIC DISEASE PATIENTS		\$5,750.00
FUNDRAISERS / EVENTS (x4)		TBD
OUTREACH - FEDERAL GROUPS		\$5,750.00
MAINTAIN VOLUNTARY ADVISORY GROUP	\$1,150.00	\$13,800.00
OUTREACH - LOCAL CONSUMER GROUPS	\$1,150.00	\$13,800.00
WRITE/DISTRIBUTE E-newsletter	\$1,500.00	\$18,000.00
DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN TO STAKEHOLDERS (mailer to 12,500)		\$8,875.00
WEB SITE - CREATE AND MAINTAIN		\$3,500.00

**STRATEGY 3: CONDUCT TARGETED
OUTREACH TO PAYERS/INSURERS AND
EMPLOYERS WITH APPROPRIATE EMPHASIS
ON THE BENEFITS OF UTILIZING THE
PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD**

	per month	per year
OUTREACH - RURAL LEGISLATORS		\$5,750.00
COORDINATE LOBBYIST TRIPS TO JUNEAU (x1)		\$6,750.00
OUTREACH - HR ADMINSTRATORS / MAJOR EMPLOYERS		\$5,750.00
OUTREACH - BENEFITS DAYS		\$5,750.00
OUTREACH - MAJOR INSURANCE COMPANIES		\$5,750.00

EVALUATION

	per month	per year
STATEWIDE POLL – MEASURE MESSAGE		\$20,000.00

ADMINISTRATIVE

	per month	per year
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$2,175.00	\$26,100.00

TOTAL (YEAR TWO) \$218,275

TWO YEAR BUDGET ESTIMATE \$631,818