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Opinions

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HEALTHeLINK releases 2020 report to community

Available at wnyhealthelink.com/2020

GUEST EDITORIAL BY HEALTHeLINK

HEALTHeLINK, the health information exchange (HIE) for Western New York, continues to play a vital role in the delivery and quality of patient care. As highlighted in the HEALTHeLINK 2020 Report to the Community, the value of HIE has never been more evident.

"We understand the unique and critical role HEALTHeLINK has to securely share clinical information and to also support our health care community in times of crisis," said Dan Porreca, executive director at HEALTHeLINK. "We proved it once again as, throughout the pandemic, HEALTHeLINK has enabled treating providers to securely obtain their patients' current health information where it's needed, when it's needed. We also continue to support the community with our core services including alert notifications and health record lookup. As the numbers show, even more providers and practices are utilizing HEALTHeLINK for improved, more efficient coordination of patient care."

When the coronavirus outbreak began to surface in early 2020, HEALTHeLINK worked in close partnership with county health departments and the New York State

Department of Health to quickly mobilize several services to support epidemiology, surveillance, and other community response efforts that continue to be actively utilized today. Since March, use of patient record lookup by county and state health departments more than doubled. In that same timeframe, more than 5.4 million COVID-19-related alert notifications were delivered to participating providers.

A few of the major highlights from HEALTHeLINK's 2020 Report to the Community include:

More than 10 million alert notifications, which included real time notification on patients' admissions, discharges and transfers, including local emergency department visits, were delivered to participating providers in 2020.

Patient record lookup which enables participating HEALTHeLINK providers to instantly access a consented patient's clinical



HEALTHeLINK

record and obtaining information such as test results, medication history, etc., totaled nearly 6 million.

In early 2020, HEALTHeLINK launched HEALTHeOUTCOMES, a community population health tool that currently utilizes clinical data from HEALTHeLINK data sources and claims data from BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, Independent Health and Univera Healthcare.

HEALTHeLINK is among the first HIEs in the country to achieve National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Data Aggregator Validation status, ensuring the integrity of clinical data received from its data sources to support HEDIS quality reporting requirements.

Over the next two years, HEALTHeLINK is working as part of the Healthy Community Alliance task force for community information exchange to explore

and ensure the integration of social needs data with patient clinical data to provide a holistic view of a patient's needs and challenges.

Finally, in 2020 alone, the HEALTHeLINK team worked on a total of 86 different products focused on improving the HIE foundation and enhancing the services offered to its participants across the health care community.

To view the 2020 HEALTHeLINK Report to the Community, visit wnyhealthelink.com/2020.

HEALTHeLINK is a collaboration among hospitals, physicians, health plans and other health care providers in the eight counties of Western New York to securely exchange clinical information to improve the quality of care, enhance patient safety and mitigate health care costs. HEALTHeLINK is a Qualified Entity of the State-wide Health Information Network for New York (SHIN-NY), which enables providers to access their patients' data from across the state. HEALTHeLINK is also a founding member of the Strategic Health Information Exchange Collaborative (SHIEC), the national trade association of health information exchanges. Providers and patients can visit wnyhealthelink.com or @HEALTHeLINK on both Facebook and Twitter for more information.

United Way continues with its mission

Dear friends, The United Way of Greater Niagara has completed our 2020 campaign. We are aware of the challenging times, but find our community generous in helping others.

We continue with our mission: To invest in programs that focus on education, health and financial stability that deliver measurable results to improve our community today and strengthen it for tomorrow along with our vision. Greater Niagara is a vibrant region where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an obstacle in our daily lives. The United Way of Greater Niagara has been in the forefront this past year in providing fund-

ing to our programs in need, which include mental health services, domestic violence services and continuing to support all the food pantries in our community. The United Way, through the Beeman Foundation, has supported day care programs for essential workers. This is only a snapshot of what the United Way of Greater Niagara has done this past year and in past years and in the years to come.

Your donation stays here in our Niagara community, which serves over 100,000 different people. Your investment in the United Way of Greater Niagara helps fund 29 program providers that provide different programs throughout our Niagara community.

We have encouraged our community to participate whether it

be financially or through volunteerism in our United Way programs that are conducted effectively through our local agencies. We are proud of our partnership with labor and we are appreciative of their strong commitment to the United Way of Greater Niagara.

We appreciate our donors that have supported us over the years and we hope that you will continue to do so and help meet our needs in the Niagara Community. Please call us at 731-4580 if you would like to donate, or go to our website at www.uwgn.org.

We will be happy to come to your business or organization any time during the year to talk about the United Way programs.

We want to thank Denise Abbott (DeGraff Medical Park CWA1168) and Nicolas Maniccia (KeyBank) for chairing the 2020 campaign

and for their commitment to the United Way of Greater Niagara.

The United Way of Greater Niagara wishes everyone a healthy 2021. We look forward to developing new relationships with our community this year.

For more information, please go to www.uwgn.org.

Thank you for Living United!

Connie Brown, president and CEO Robert J. Kazeangin Jr., chairman of the board United Way of Greater Niagara

Say You Saw It In The



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