Geographic Health Information Systems: A Platform To Support The "Triple Aim?"

Author:
Marie Lynn Miranda, Jeffrey Ferranti, Benjamin Strauss, Brian Neelon and Robert M. Califf

Abstract

Despite the rapid growth of electronic health data, most data systems do not connect individual patient records to data sets from outside the health care delivery system. These isolated data systems cannot support efforts to recognize or address how the physical and environmental context of each patient influences health choices and health outcomes. In this article we describe how a geographic health information system in Durham, North Carolina, links health system and social and environmental data via shared geography to provide a multidimensional understanding of individual and community health status and vulnerabilities. Geographic health information systems can be useful in supporting the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aim Initiative to improve the experience of care, improve the health of populations, and reduce per capita costs of health care. A geographic health information system can also provide a comprehensive information base for community health assessment and intervention for accountable care that includes the entire population of a geographic area.

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