

# Health Information Technology Community College Consortium Project

**Martha Vrana-Bossart, MSN, RN-BC, HITPro-CP, IM, PW, TR**

*Kennebec Valley Community College part of Region E led by Tidewater Community College*

## Introduction and Background

The growing demand for Health IT professionals to assist hospitals and medical practices in the process of transition from paper to electronic health records was the impetus for grant funding to train a workforce prepared to assist in that transition. The Office of the National Coordinator of Information Technology (ONC) divided the country into five regions for the purpose of developing a workforce of trained Health IT professionals. Community colleges in each of the five regions were responsible for refining and delivering Health IT training. Kennebec Valley Community College was part of the project since the beginning and in the final year, was responsible for providing training not only in the state of Maine, but New Hampshire and Vermont as well.

## Methods

The 26 week curriculum was organized and taught combining project and change management methodology. Project management structure focused on the EHR “system side”, task-oriented (what and why) side of things while change management focused on the EHR “people-side” process oriented (how) side of EHR implementation.

## Results

Table 1: Overall Program Enrollment and Completion for the 31 month duration

<i>Program Enrollment and Completion</i>				
	Program Y1 2010-11	Program Y2 2011-12	Program Y3 2012-13	Total
<b>Total students</b>	68	143	96	307
<b>Target</b>	85	150	300	535
<b>Percent of Target</b>	80%	95%	32%	56%
<b>Maine Target (year 3)</b>			100	
<b>Percent of Maine Target (year 3)</b>			69%	
<b>Completed</b>	40	109	81	230
<b>Percent Completed</b>	58.8%	76.2%	84.3%	75%

Table 2: HITPro Certification Exam Statistics: graduates had options to sit for up to six exams dependent upon which track was take or if both tracks were taken.

	Graduates Y1 2010-11 (40 students)	Graduates Y2 2011-12 (109 students)	Graduates Y3 2012-13 (81 students)	Total (307 students)
<b>Took HITPro Exam</b>	5	14	28	47
<b>Percent who took exam</b>	12.5%	13%	35%	15%
<b>Total # of exams taken***</b>	5	37	55	97
<b>Total # exams passed</b>	4	35	50	89
<b>Percent Passing</b>	80%	94.6%	90%	92%

\*\*\*Many students took multiple exams

## Discussion

At the beginning of the program, 34% of the student population was employed in Health IT; 44% of the student population was employed in Healthcare; 3% of the student population was employed in IT; and 19% were employed in the “other” category. Upon completion of the program, most participants indicated that they felt well-qualified to act as an EHR Consultant or EHR Engineer. Most of the employers indicated that they see value in the students’ participation. The employment target was 80 percent, and here the results are somewhat less clear. Many of the participants work in a health care setting and most of those workplaces have begun to implement an Electronic Health Records system.

The involvement of the participants has ranged from being part of the team that has selected the EHR product and is now working as part of a team that will implement the system to essentially end-users of the EHR system with a better understanding of how the system fits into the overall mission of the workplace. Of the 48 respondents to the survey in Year Three, only two reported not having any job (5 percent) and only six indicated that they were hoping to get their first EHR-related position after completing the course (15 percent). So 80 percent of respondents are employed and use the training in their work. It should be noted that several respondents are not working in the health care field directly but believe the training will be useful to them on the job.

## References:

Hartley, Carolyn & Jones, Edward; EHR Implementation: A Step-by-step guide for the medical practice, second edition, AMA, Chicago, IL

Health IT Workforce Curriculum Components: National Training and Dissemination Center <http://onc-ntdc.info/> Curriculum created by: Columbia University, Duke University, Johns Hopkins University, Oregon Health & Science University, and The University of Alabama at Birmingham

HIMSS: Dictionary of Healthcare Information Technology Terms, Acronyms and Organizations, second edition, 2010, HIMSS, Chicago, IL