



Henry County Healthcare Sector

Why Is This Important?

The healthcare industry has unique challenges. It inherently generates large amounts of data that must be safe-guarded to comply with individual privacy regulations. For companies charged with managing and working with this information, high-speed Internet access and technology innovations are crucial. On a daily basis, doctors must keep up with the latest research; patient records must be easily accessible and accurate; and images, test results and prescriptions have to be delivered promptly, without errors, to practitioners, pharmacies and insurance providers. In healthcare, errors and delays are not only costly, but also dangerous.

Many providers are converting to electronic medical records which can be easily updated and shared on secure, internal networks. Network-based technologies like video-conferencing and digital stethoscopes allow specialists to consult with rural patients, reducing travel time and hazards. The ability to reach rural patients through technology has allowed many people to seek treatment that otherwise might not. Bringing the best of healthcare to every Ohio citizen is a worthy goal.

Because of the nature of its activities, the healthcare industry has found the perfect partner in high-speed Internet technology. The convenience of the Internet has simplified information transfers and improved medical equipment while maintaining confidential patient information.

Henry County Healthcare

- Henry County Hospital, www.henrycountyhospital.org
- Henry Department of Health, www.henrycohd.org
- Ohio Health Care Association OHCA, www.ohca.org
- Ohio Department of Health, www.odh.ohio.gov
- Hospitals in Ohio, www.theagapecenter.com/Hospitals/Ohio.htm
- Ohio Hospital Association, www.ohanet.org

Where Are We Today?

Statewide, 58% of the healthcare industry utilizes Broadband. Nearly one-fourth of this figure subscribed to Broadband in the last year. In Henry County, residents use the Internet more than the state average within

the healthcare sector. Below is a listing of the various uses of the Internet with the percentage of residents using each application:

- 66% of residents find health or medical information online (68% statewide)
- 33% of residents interact with insurance companies (36% statewide)
- 23% of residents contact healthcare professionals (28% statewide)

Healthcare providers such as the Henry County Health Department, www.henrycohd.org, provide a variety of health services, both to keep the community healthy and to restore the health of sick patients. They have a T1 line from ODH, and receive some IT support from the County IT department. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) web page offers applications from birth certificates to sewer permits. The services available can be viewed on the website along with health-related links such as restaurant inspection scores, community health status report and healthcare professions guide.

The Health Department is currently using several web based applications. They would like to see more real-time sharing of data, wireless connectivity, and application standards to allow various program interfaces, particularly in the area of EMR (electronic medical records).

Henry County Hospital www.henrycountyhospital.org, located in Napoleon, serves the community. The Web site offers advanced applications such as, on-line bill payment, eCards, and a section for infants called BabyNet.

Healthcare Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	2.5	5	
Applications & Services	3	5	
Leadership	2	5	

The Henry County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the healthcare sector is already using some technology to its advantage and identified opportunities for additional technology applications within the health community.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of Networked Places, Henry County’s healthcare sector is

currently at stage 2+ on a 0 to 5 scale. Some doctors regularly use computers to enter and maintain patient records. Digital instruments and imaging equipment are being acquired.

- **Applications & Services** – In the category of technology Applications & Services, the healthcare sector is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Many providers have informational websites. Many providers store patient records electronically. Telemedicine is being tested. Many offices are electronically transmitting records to insurers for reimbursement.
- **Leadership** – In terms of technology Leadership within the healthcare sector, Henry County is currently at stage 2 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some providers have begun the conversion to electronic medical records. Some providers are investigating how to deploy wireless technologies for mobile workers.

Where Do We Need To Be?

The Henry County eCommunity Leadership Team sees great potential for the use of technology in the healthcare sector. Technology advantages are already being used and additional opportunities have been identified for additional applications within the health community. The team has set goals to move the ratings of networked places, leadership, and application & services to stage 5 on a 0 to 5 scale. The team's vision includes:

- Most equipment has been converted to digital. Desktop videoconferencing is routine at all hospitals and major clinics. Telephone systems have converted to VoIP to save money. Remote monitoring of patients with chronic conditions is standard procedure.
- All providers allow patients to schedule appointments, view records and get advice online. All patient records are stored electronically and routinely sent electronically to distant providers to aid in diagnosis and treatment for emergency patients. Telemedicine routinely used to access specialists. Wireless feeds in ambulances provide real-time patient assessment to ER staff.
- Healthcare leaders see themselves as a key part of the community's overall economic strategy. Leaders are visible and active in strategy development and implementation. Executives of the region's hospitals, clinics, insurers, employers and other healthcare providers are meeting regularly to find ways to collaboratively reduce the cost of healthcare without compromising quality of service.

How Do We Get There?

Priority Projects

- Develop Healthcare committee to discuss electronic medical records, billing, and other systems to enable seamless data transfer of patient records and other valuable information between hospitals and physicians offices.
- Educate physicians on available technologies and the benefits of technology in medicine.
- Implement a common Electronic Health Record environment.
- Education for employees and physicians regarding the benefits.
- Substantial gain will be realized in the following areas:
 - Billing Improvements
 - Decreases the amount of lost charges
 - Lowers the number of insurance re-bill's

Other Potential Projects

- Increase use of video and web conferencing tools to educate healthcare professionals through distance learning and inform the public of current healthcare activities.
- Use state and community colleges, adult education programs and libraries to provide safe, vendor-neutral technology education for healthcare providers.
- Seek grants to upgrade technology and train medical staff.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Healthcare sector include:

Rebecca Earlie, Health Commissioner, Henry Department of Health

Nick Badenhop, IS Manager, Henry County Hospital

Joe Dildine, CEO, First Call for Help

Richard Varney, Director of Operations Henry Department of Health

In working toward the implementation of the sector-specific goals, Connect Ohio will recommend specific additional participants be brought into the process, who may include technology providers, subject matter experts, other community organizations, funding sources, government agencies, and the resources of agencies and commercial providers of products and services to the healthcare sector.



Brad McMillen, Northwest State Operations Manager for Connect Ohio will continue to work with the sector leaders to advance selected projects toward their completion. By leveraging Connect Ohio's project management process, its research information, and its partners, projects will be defined, developed, and reviewed to help assure that the local teams are equipped to execute them. Connect Ohio will assist in the identification of funding sources, introducing technical resources, and helping to define the measurable goals and timelines that will ensure that the projects are actionable, measurable, and valuable.