**Integrated Care Partners**  
**And the Critical Role of Information Technology in Health Care Delivery**

“Clinical integration is needed to facilitate the coordination of patient care across conditions, providers, settings, and time in order to achieve care that is safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable, and patient-focused” (American Hospital Association).

Care coordination is based on communicating information, which is accomplished much more easily with a strong information technology infrastructure. Information technology is critical in the new age of health care when payment is based on patient outcomes and quality rather than individual services, tests and procedures. IT supports care delivery by enabling the sharing of patient information and other data, improving coordination through the sharing of information, and facilitating the measurement of performance and quality. IT will play an important role in **Integrated Care Partners’** achievement of high-quality, coordinated care at a reasonable cost – or, in other words, providing value.

Sharing patient information reduces duplicative testing and medication errors and should result in safer and higher-quality care at a lower cost. Hartford HealthCare’s (HHC’s) Information Technology Services (ITS) organization is building a Health Information Exchange (HIE), which essentially is a “transport mechanism” that will allow all providers to obtain the same information about a patient, even if those providers aren’t on the same electronic medical record (EMR) system. However, HHC ITS is in the process of selecting an EMR system to unify EMRs across HHC. **Integrated Care Partners** members not employed by HHC will have the opportunity to participate in that system.

Meanwhile, within the next 30 to 60 days, **Integrated Care Partners** members will be able to access the HIE and view all a patient’s lab results. HHC also is developing an enterprise imaging approach which will allow clinicians to view studies performed anywhere in the system. This is a big step forward in more effectively coordinating care. In addition, over the next six months, **Integrated Care Partners** members will have access to analytics that will assist in managing population health – keeping people well rather than just treating them when they’re sick.

Although the pace of change in the health care industry creates challenges, it also creates opportunities. **Integrated Care Partners** will take these opportunities to improve care for our patients and help our members achieve their goals.

Please send any questions to Integratedcarepartners@hhchealth.org, and we will respond as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,
Dr. James Cardon  
CEO, **Integrated Care Partners**  
Executive Vice President & Chief Clinical Integration Officer, Hartford HealthCare

Visit our **Integrated Care Partners** Web site at [www.integratedcarepartners.org](http://www.integratedcarepartners.org)
Question and Answer re Information Technology

**Question:** I received your email recently about Integrated Care Partners. I have been on staff at Hartford Hospital since 1999 and am a partner in a three-M.D. ophthalmology group. We are currently looking for an electronic medical record system. The more I look into it, the more confused I get. I am particularly concerned about integration with larger health care organizations. How can we, as a small medical practice, integrate with larger organizations if we aren't on the same electronic medical record system? These electronic medical record systems do not seem very willing or able to communicate with one another. Before we make a decision that will cost tens of thousands of dollars and have a dramatic impact on our workflow, I would like to get some more guidance about the direction community health care integration is going. Do you have any advice for us? Can we really be integrated if we don't communicate electronically? I would appreciate any help you could give us.

Thanks,
Christopher J. Kelly, M.D.

**Response from Luis Taveras, Senior Vice President, Information Technology Services**

Hartford Healthcare recently announced plans for the implementation of an integrated electronic health record system. This announcement has generated many questions from our partner community physicians regarding the impact on their own electronic health records. The information below is being provided as a guide in your decision-making process. We will continue to provide additional information as it becomes available.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>At this time, if your group...</th>
<th>You should consider...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...Has no electronic health record but is looking to implement one.</td>
<td>Holding off on making a final decision until July 2013. By then, HHC will have completed the selection process, chosen an electronic health record solution, and designed an incentive package* for you to consider, should you choose to implement the same system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>...Is in the middle of an installation of Allscripts, MyWay or another electronic health record.</td>
<td>Abiding by the terms of your contract with the vendor you are working with. If possible, consider discontinuing the implementation until July 2013. By then, HHC will have completed the selection process, chosen an electronic health record solution, and designed an incentive package* for you to consider, should you choose to implement the same system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>...Has an implemented electronic health record but would like to consider moving to an alternative one.</td>
<td>Our alternative solution. In July 2013, we will have selected an alternative electronic health record for your consideration. We will also have designed the incentive package* that fits this particular situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>...Has an implemented electronic health record and we have no desire whatsoever to change.</td>
<td>Hartford HealthCare will implement an electronic health information exchange solution that will allow us to exchange some information bi-directionally with our community physician partners. We should have more information about this by July 1, 2013.</td>
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*subject to Stark and other federal laws and regulations

Connected Care will be distributed to physician leaders and throughout Hartford HealthCare on a regular basis as we work to integrate our clinical practice in support of our communities.