In recent years, healthcare providers have invested deeply in technology — technology that has the potential to drive transformational change. Now the focus is on how to ensure that these investments deliver the full value expected.

Healthcare organizations must optimize their technology to produce the regulatory, clinical and operational benefits they envisioned. At the same time, they must keep driving business and healthcare delivery innovation as models of care evolve.

The possibilities are limitless — but IT budgets are not.

**EHRs: A Promise Still to Be Fulfilled**

Health systems have invested significant amounts of time and money in electronic health records (EHRs). However, current EHR technology does not fully support seamless integration and interoperability, and many systems could do more to meet clinicians’ needs. For those who expected EHRs to enable care collaboration, transitions of care and new models of care, the promise remains unfulfilled.

RAND Corporation validated clinicians’ concerns in a report describing EHRs as “a unique and vexing challenge to physician professional satisfaction.” In addition, the American Medical Association recently published EHR “usability priorities.” Physicians seem to have the same sentiments as everyone else: They approve of EHRs in principle, but the current state of EHR technology causes frustration and does not yet facilitate the best care for patients.

While EHRs may not yet provide all the anticipated clinical value, CIOs can still do much to transform their business and deliver better outcomes for their organizations and clinicians, as well as patients and their families.

**Seeing Healthcare CIOs as Critical Change Agents**

CIOs must become key drivers of business change. As health systems move toward modern EHRs and related digital and social technologies, CIOs are tasked with transforming their IT portfolio. Some are moving away from a heavily customized environment to a “commercial off-the-shelf” (COTS) environment. Others are using the opportunity of a merger or an upgrade as the basis for major technology transformation. These tipping points are forcing CIOs to re-examine not only their technology environment, but also how they are organized to innovate and deliver quality service.

**Empowering Your Employees**

Complex healthcare IT environments require more and more resources to maintain the underlying EHR technologies and legacy systems. But by focusing on legacy support and day-to-day maintenance, these additional employees are underutilized — unable to apply critical skills toward delivering direct value to their organizational stakeholders or the patients they care for.

When core applications are made more efficient, employees can focus on delivering greater innovation. The speed at which new initiatives are delivered increases, and employee frustration and turnover decrease.

As job satisfaction improves, employees are less likely to develop their own solutions or purchase them directly from the open market without proper governance. “Shadow IT” efforts are a problem for any organization. But in an industry as highly regulated as healthcare, security breaches or service disruptions can have dire consequences.

**Responding to Regulatory and Legislative Challenges**

Meeting regulations requires significant effort, often with severe time constraints and harsh penalties for noncompliance. Further, legislative and reimbursement changes are driving the embrace of new models of care, such as population health management and care coordination. For a CIO, the challenge is how to innovate to improve care when as much as 80% of the IT budget is spent “keeping the lights on.”

CIOs host potentially hundreds of business and ancillary clinical applications in addition to their EHRs. Even though complex interfaces connect internal applications and external
facilities, organizations still struggle to create a longitudinal record combining EHRs, externally sourced and patient-generated data. Securing all these applications is a nightmare, and the HIPAA and HITECH stakes are high.²

Optimization services can reduce the complexity in your IT landscape, making it easier to achieve compliance while also easing budget strains. A streamlined environment will provide a much-needed platform for innovation.

Overcoming the Talent Crunch

Competition for talented healthcare IT professionals has intensified as the industry works to meet new regulatory requirements as well as changing business models and objectives. The challenge is not just a shortage of people with technical skills; it’s also a shortage of people who have the skills to marry technological savvy with business strategy as healthcare becomes more connected, coordinated and accountable.

New business models for healthcare IT optimize a blend of your staff and strategic partners.

Transforming Your Business with CSC Agile Health

In CSC’s 2014 Global CIO Survey, 64% of healthcare CIOs identified modernizing legacy applications as critical/high-priority, and 45% said managing legacy workloads is hindering innovation. At CSC, our clients tell us they want to drive more efficiency and innovation. We can help them:

- Reduce the cost of maintaining a legacy environment
- Increase technology flexibility
- Gain the ability to change quickly
- Enable IT staff to focus on clinical and operational innovation

Many businesses face these same issues, and we have developed best practices from working across numerous industries. In addition, with extensive healthcare domain knowledge, and years of experience working with some of the world’s largest and most complex healthcare systems, CSC is well placed to help you transform for the future. Our innovative solutions help you adopt new models of care and take advantage of next-generation technologies. We can also help you rebalance your IT budget to step up innovation projects.

CSC can help you optimize your healthcare IT environment by:

- Improving maintainability and reducing costs. Through CSC’s application rationalization approach, we’ll help you assess and streamline your IT assets, optimizing some and recommending the replacement of others. With an applications portfolio properly sized for your business, you’ll improve operational efficiency and lower your total cost of ownership.
- Transforming existing applications to better meet business needs. Through application modernization, we’ll help you unlock the full potential of your applications to drive operational improvement and cost savings. By leveraging innovations in secure cloud, mobility, cybersecurity, social media and analytics, we can help your applications deliver greater value. We’ll transform individual applications — or your entire portfolio.
- Improving care by integrating clinical legacy data into clinical workflow. Our real-time clinical data archival solution puts data contextually into a clinician’s workflow instead of the data store to be queried separately. This lets you turn off legacy systems while giving caregivers access to critical historical patient care data in EHRs they are using.
- Using IT to drive transformational change. IT is a vital lever for maximizing business value and innovation. With the efficiency you’ll gain through EHR/ERP optimization, you can reinvest the savings into innovative projects that will move you boldly into the future.
- Freeing up your IT staff to focus on innovation and delivering a great customer experience. By allowing us to manage your legacy applications, your staff can use their skills to bring about strategic change. You can reposition your IT team closer to the business, while we manage and maintain your environment. We can aggregate, securely integrate and broker IT services.

Forward-looking healthcare organizations are seeking to improve outcomes by using more agile and flexible IT. Let us help you improve healthcare delivery and effectively manage costs by maximizing the benefits of technology across your enterprise.

References

1. Factors Affecting Physician Professional Satisfaction and Their Implications for Patient Care, Health Systems, and Health Policy, Mark W. Friedberg et al., RAND Corporation, 2013
http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR439.html

2. Improving Care: Priorities to Improve Electronic Health Record Usability, American Medical Association, 2014

http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/enforcementrule/hitechenforcementifr.html

Learn more at csc.com/healthcare.
#AGILEHEALTH