

About the Health Assistance Partnership

The Health Assistance Partnership (HAP) is dedicated to helping State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) enhance their capacity to serve Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers. Such assistance helps Medicare beneficiaries make informed health care decisions and empowers them to access the health care benefits to which they are entitled.

SHIPTools

In early 2007, HAP created SHIPTools, a customizable web-based management system intended to help SHIP team members save time by collecting and calculating National Performance Reporting, systematically training team members and supporting beneficiary outreach activities.

SHIPTools makes it possible to turn on and off features on a case by case basis depending on the unique wants and needs of SHIP programs. It also makes it possible to add on to the tools, just as you would add a room onto a house that already has a solid foundation laid. SHIPTools is the culmination of HAP's collaboration with Iowa and Ohio SHIP programs that connects three previous stand-alone technology initiatives into a single new code base that offers maximum flexibility for tailoring to the individual needs of SHIP programs.

Prior to SHIPTools, HAP worked on a series of web-based tool initiatives with the guidance and collaboration of Iowa and Ohio SHIP Programs. Each of the tools from these initiatives was informed by a technology survey HAP conducted in the fall of 2004 that identified technology needs throughout the SHIP network. Funding for these initiatives collectively originated from the Atlantic Philanthropies, supporting HAP's capacity building efforts within the SHIP network, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), through their Competitive Leadership Grants to selected SHIP programs in 2005.

2004 - Electronic National Performance Reporting Initiative (eNPR)

When it was developed in the winter of 2004, HAP's electronic National Performance Reporting (eNPR) was a web-based initiative that captured the data required to satisfy national performance reporting elements defined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. At the time, HAP's technology survey found that approximately 57% of survey respondents reported client contact forms via a paper-based process.

As a result, HAP examined the paper-based process to design a more efficient electronic process that could not only help SHIPs satisfy all their reporting requirements, but that also provided local SHIP programs with real-time information on the services they were providing

in their communities. The eNPR was developed through a grant from the Atlantic Philanthropies to promote capacity building in the SHIP network.

Competitive Leadership Grants

Under Competitive Leadership Grants awarded by CMS in 2005, the Iowa and Ohio SHIP programs collaborated with HAP to address needs in the areas of volunteer management and training. HAP was able to use data collected during the technology assessment of 2004 to inform how these projects could also fulfill needs across the SHIP network.

2005 – Online Recertification System (ORS) Initiative in Iowa

In April of 2005, CMS awarded the Iowa SHIIP program a Competitive Leadership Grant to transform their paper-based annual volunteer recertification process into a web-based tool. HAP, in collaboration with Iowa, created the ORS, a web-based initiative that provided volunteers with immediate feedback on SHIP-related issues. Findings from the project indicated:

- The ORS helped volunteers become familiar with where to find the answers to issues that arise while counseling and
- State SHIIP program staff better understood what trainings were needed and what topics should be covered in those trainings.

2005 - Collaborative Tools Initiative in Ohio

Through a Competitive Leadership Grant awarded by CMS to the Ohio SHIP program (OSHIIP) in April of 2005, OSHIIP and HAP partnered on the development of a series of Web-Based Collaborative Tools. The goal of the Collaborative Tools was two-fold: to provide SHIPs with a branded web portal that is a central reference point for SHIP activities while offering volunteers their own 'space' or intranet that connects them to other aspects of the SHIP program. These tools helped OSHIIP better serve the Medicare beneficiaries in their communities by:

- Promoting the flow of communication between OSHIIP staff, volunteers and the general public,
- Better organizing volunteer efforts within their local communities, and
- Providing a virtual 'jumping off point' for everything related to the OSHIIP programs.