Assessing Organizational Readiness

Is Your Organization Ready For Telemedicine?

Experts estimate that 50 percent of all change efforts fail because leaders do not sufficiently assess organizational readiness for change.

Telemedicine offers healthcare organizations new and effective systems for delivering healthcare and, in many instances, allows organizations to reach far beyond current service offerings and think creatively about delivery models. Implementing a telemedicine program is an organizational change, and like all change it's about people. Technology is a cornerstone of telehealth programs; however, successful implementation requires the ability to manage change.

How do you know if your organization is ready to take on the challenges and embrace the opportunities of implementing a telemedicine program? The best time to assess an organization's readiness for change is before you begin implementation. The importance of assessing your organization's readiness for change cannot be underestimated. CTEC's *Assessing Organizational Readiness Guide* will assist your organization in determining its readiness to implement telemedicine.

Telemedicine Programs don't always begin as a result of an organization's strategic planning process. In many cases, an individual within the organization takes an interest in telemedicine and begins to promote that idea to others. Ideally, an organization embraces telemedicine and makes optimal use of the technologies, but unfortunately there are programs that did not adequately or accurately assess the current position of the organization prior to starting a telemedicine program and as a result end up with expensive equipment sitting idle in a closet.

Determining organizational readiness is an initial step an organization should take to assure that telemedicine is fully utilized. This assessment may be as simple as reviewing the steps in this guide to assure that critical areas have been considered or as detailed as a written presentation for executive management. The level of formality depends on your organization's needs and culture. No matter how extensive the review, the assessment of organizational readiness is a critical component of a successful telemedicine program. This guide provides a worksheet for documenting answers to important organizational readiness questions and provides a summary template that can be used to discuss your proposed program with stakeholders and decision makers within your organization.

Assessing Your Organization's Readiness

What exactly is organizational readiness and why is it important? Organizational readiness is the ability and willingness of an organization to shift from its current way of operating. It is becoming aware of the current state of an organization in the context of going somewhere new. Organizations that successfully implement a telemedicine program have the internal *ability* and *willingness* to move in a new direction. Ability focuses on accessing new skill sets necessary to successfully implement a change. Willingness focuses on the desire of the organization and its employees to change. Assessing organizational readiness will identify any major challenges that could delay or prevent your new program's successful start-up. Organizational strengths can be leveraged to assist in program development and acceptance. Performing an evaluation of organizational readiness does not have to be time consuming, and in many cases can be easily accomplished in a day using the steps described below.

Step One: Identify the Anticipated or Desired Change

The first step in assessing organizational readiness is to identify the anticipated and desired change. To clearly define the desired change, develop a short paragraph that specifically describes the action or program that the organization is considering. While this may seem rather basic, it will assure that the stakeholders see the same vision.

Some examples might be:

- For a clinic: Implement a telemedicine program that allows medical specialty services to be provided at a clinic using remote specialists.
- For a hospital: Implement a telestroke program that provides telemedicine neurology consults for emergency department patients experiencing stroke symptoms.
- For a provider: Expand the existing practice to provide dermatology services to new and existing patient referral.

Write Your Program Description:

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Step Two: Determine the Current State of the Organization in Relation to the Desired Change

The second step in assessing organizational readiness is to determine the existing state of the organization as it relates to the desired change. To clearly determine an organization's current position to the desired change, it is necessary to accurately assess the alignment of the proposed project with the organization's current vision, mission, and strategic plan. Consider the following questions to determine your organization's preparedness and then record your answers by marking the appropriate box.

1. Does the proposed project align with the organization's current vision, mission, and strategic plan?
    - Does the project support the organization's vision of its desired future?
    - Does the project align itself with the organization's belief of who it is, what it does, and how it serves?
    - Does the project support the organization's approach to achieving its goals and objectives?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Alignment with Organizational Vision / Mission					
Alignment with Strategic Plan					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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2. Is the proposed project consistent with the organization's values and culture?
    - Is the project consistent with the organization's guiding principles?
    - Does the project align with the organization's existing beliefs, assumptions, and expectations?
    - Does the organization's culture support innovation and clinical technology applications?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Alignment with Organizational Values / Culture					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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3. Are resources available to begin development of the proposed project?

- Is funding available for the initial planning activities?
- Is there staff available to work on the project?
- Are there other initiatives competing against the project?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Resource Availability					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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4. Does the proposed program have a champion?

- Is there a clinical champion for the project?
- Is there an administrative champion for the project?
- Are there leadership groups in place to foster support?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Identified Champion					
Decision Maker Interest					
Support for Initiative					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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5. Do stakeholders support the program?

- What perceptions do stakeholders have about the proposed program?
- Are stakeholders educated about the proposed program?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Stakeholder program perceptions					
Stakeholder program education					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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6. Who has authority over the proposed program?

- Who has to approve the project?
- Are they supportive of the project?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Program Authority					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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7. What does a SWOT analysis reveal about organizational successes and potential barriers?

A SWOT Analysis is a beneficial exercise in assessing organizational readiness for implementing a new program. SWOT identifies an organization's strengths and weakness and may identify any areas that need change in order to move forward. It identifies opportunities that will contribute to success and the threats or barriers that may inhibit success.

- What are the organization's strengths?
- What are the organization's challenges or weaknesses?
- Where are the organization's business opportunities?
- Are there any barriers to the organization's success?

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Internal Factors (skill sets, strengths, weaknesses)					
External Factors (opportunities, challenges)					

Actions Required to Become Fully Ready / Comments:

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Next Steps

Answering the questions above will give you a good idea about whether your organization is fully ready to undertake a new program implementation. If not fully ready, the assessment will give you a clear picture of what specific areas require attention before proceeding, such as obtaining support from stakeholder groups. After making any necessary organizational adjustments or changes, reviewing the assessment worksheets again will help ensure that you are ready to move forward.

When there is agreement that the organization is ready to move forward, a structured program development process can be extremely beneficial in keeping your implementation on track with a minimum of problems. The California Telemedicine and eHealth Center (CTEC) has developed an easy to follow seven-step approach to successful telemedicine program development called the CTEC Telemedicine Program Developer™. This product provides you with a road map from program concept to working reality. The Program Developer™ will guide your organization through the program development process offering practical how-to information and tips, along with real world explanations and examples.

California Telemedicine & eHealth Center

Assessing Organizational Readiness Summary

Date:	Organization:

Brief Description of Desired Initiative:

Record all of your answers to the previous questions in the appropriate boxes below.

RATE READINESS FACTORS

Not Ready <--> Ready

	Major Barrier	Substantial Barrier	Significant Changes Needed	Minimal Changes Needed	Full Support
Alignment with Organizational Vision / Mission					
Alignment with Strategic Plan					
Alignment with Organizational Values / Culture					
Resource Availability: Funding					
Resource Availability: Human Resources					
Resource Availability: IT					
Skill Sets					
Internal Factors					
External Factors					
Program Authority					
Identified Champion					
Decision Maker Interest					
Support for Initiative					
Other Priorities					
Overall Rating					

List of Actions Required to Become Fully Ready:

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RECOMMENDATION:

❏ Move Forward Now

❏ Make Necessary Changes and
   Reassess in _____ months

❏ Not Appropriate

CTEC
California Telemedicine
and *e*Health Center

CTEC created the Telehealth Program Developer™ to provide standardized guidance through defining, planning, and implementing a telemedicine program. This product provides a road map from program concept to working reality. CTEC's Telehealth Program Developer™ presents telemedicine program development as a seven-step process organized across three phases.

CTEC's Program Developer™

Seven Steps to Successful Telemedicine Program Development

DEFINE

STEP 1 Determine Needs

STEP 2 Define & Specify Program Model

STEP 3 Develop Business Case

DEVELOP

STEP 4 Plan Program & Technology

STEP 5 Develop Performance Monitoring Plan

DO

STEP 6 Implement Telemedicine Program

STEP 7 Evaluate & Improve Program (Ongoing)

The California Telemedicine & eHealth Center (CTEC) is the leading source of expertise and comprehensive knowledge on the development and operation of telemedicine and telehealth programs. CTEC has received national recognition as one of six federally designated Telehealth Resource Centers around the country.

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