USE OF REGIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION ORGANIZATIONS IN EMERGENCIES

Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs) allow healthcare stakeholders to exchange health information electronically. While there are many uses of RHIOs (see AHIMA citation below) and they are central to the Office of the National Coordinator’s Nationwide Health Information Network (see reference below), RHIOs can be crucial in an emergency. When there is a declaration of an emergency or a qualifying event, hospitals and providers participating in a RHIO provide access to and receive patient demographic and registration information and other patient health information through the RHIO database. Providers accessing the RHIO database assist in patient reunification, improve the quality of care by providing prompt, confidential exchange of health information and prevent medical errors. A form RHIO access agreement as well as a RHIO consent form are provided with this Emergency Preparedness Toolkit.

Resources on RHIOs:

- **Surveying the RHIO Landscape: A Description of Current RHIO Models** (with a Focus on Patient Identification)
- **Implementing an Infrastructure for a Regional Health Information Organization**
- **Guide to Establishing a Regional Health Information Organization**
- **Managing Information Privacy & Security in Healthcare: RHIOs and HIPAA**
- **Managing Information Privacy & Security in Healthcare: RHIO Privacy and Security Update**
- **Creating Operations Research Models to Guide RHIO Decision Making**
- **Model RHIO Consent Form**
- **Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN)**