

Biomedical and Health Informatics Lecture
Monday, May 14, 2007, Rm. K-069, 12:00-12:50

Jac Davies, MS, MPH, Director of Program Development for Inland Northwest Health Services and Douglas L. Weeks, PhD, Senior Research Investigator Inland Northwest Health Services

“Shared Services: A Unique Model for Addressing Health Care’s Challenges”

Hospitals and physician offices face a wide variety of financial and administrative challenges, especially in rural communities. Implementing advanced information technology, offering extra services to the community, conducting program evaluation and research – all of these activities can be difficult for individual organizations to undertake on their own. To address this issue, competing hospital systems in Spokane, Washington, created a joint venture to provide shared services to multiple hospitals and physician offices. Now in its thirteenth year, Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS) has applied the shared services model successfully to a wide variety of programs and activities. Currently 34 hospitals -- primarily independent, rural facilities -- are connected to a single, integrated hospital information system. Thirty-eight clinics, with 250 health care providers, are utilizing a centrally operated electronic medical record service. In addition, INHS runs a diabetes education program that served over 1400 patients in 2006. St. Luke’s Rehabilitation Institute, operated by INHS on behalf of the hospitals in Spokane, is the state’s largest free-standing inpatient rehabilitation hospital. In 2006, St Luke’s provided rehabilitation services to more than 7800 patients. Not only do these programs provide a more efficient, effective way to deliver services to multiple health care organizations and their patients, the shared services model creates extensive research opportunities. Health care information from a wide geographic region is concentrated in a single location. Large numbers of patients can be reached for special studies. This presentation will provide an overview of the INHS shared services programs and identify potential opportunities for research collaboration with UW faculty.

Jac Davies is the Director of Program Development for Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS). Ms. Davies is responsible for identifying new opportunities for program growth, and new partnerships for INHS. She also oversees a continuing education program for health professionals in rural communities. In addition, Ms Davies facilitates planning activities for area healthcare organizations interested in health information exchange. Prior to joining INHS, Ms. Davies worked at the Washington State Department of Health, where she served as Assistant Secretary for the Division of Epidemiology, Health Statistics, and Public Health Laboratories. Ms. Davies sits on the boards of the Foundation for Health Care Quality and the Washington State Public Health Association, and is a clinical faculty member of the Center for Public Health Informatics at the University of Washington. She has an MS and an MPH from the University of Washington, and a BS from the Mississippi University for Women.

Douglas L. Weeks, PhD, is Senior Research Investigator for INHS, with responsibilities for company-wide consultation on research design and data analysis. He also holds an appointment as Research Professor in the Departments of Pharmacotherapy and the Health Research and Education Center at Washington State University. He obtained a PhD in 1989 in Research and Evaluation Methodology from the University of Colorado. Dr. Weeks has expertise in design and data analysis for experimental and non-experimental studies. He has an extensive publication record in peer-reviewed basic science and clinical research journals, and has received previous funding through the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the American Heart Association.