



## Section 2: Characterizing Your HIE Project

This section describes background work that needs to be done to prepare for developing the evaluation plan by—

- Describing the HIE project
- Identifying the stakeholders
- Articulating the HIE project goals and objectives

### Describing Your HIE Project

The first step in understanding your HIE project is to gather a description of the HIE project that you are evaluating. This may come directly from the HIE strategic plan, project plan, proposal, or other documents outlining the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the project.

A strong project description clearly identifies the stage where the HIE project will be during the evaluation. The stages of an HIE project are often broadly characterized as planning, testing, or fully operational.<sup>9-13</sup> An evaluation can be conducted during any or all of these stages. If feasible, conduct your evaluation over several phases of the project to identify issues and improvements, as well as to inform decisions about the system.

### Identifying Your HIE Project Stakeholders

The next step in understanding your HIE project is to identify the stakeholders involved. The list of stakeholders includes all of the organizations accessing the HIE, as well as funding sources, patients, and any other groups interested in and impacted by the project.

You should identify each stakeholder's motivations, needs, and requirements for HIE. Ask the following questions to help you identify stakeholders and their concerns:

- Who is connecting to the HIE system? Who is interested? Who is impacted? Who is paying for it?
- What do stakeholders, including patients, hope to accomplish and gain by using the HIE project services?
- Do funding sources expect written reports?
- How will you present findings to the stakeholders?
- How can you be accountable and demonstrate specific benefits?
- How will you share what you have learned with others?



### Articulating Your HIE Project Goals and Objectives

Once you have developed a description of your HIE project and identified the stakeholders, the next step is to articulate the project's goals and objectives.



## HIE Project Goals and Objectives

Goals are general guidelines that describe the strategic results that an organization wants to achieve. Objectives define specific steps to attain the identified goals, are measurable, and usually have a defined completion date. The HIE project goals are statements that describe the intended strategic outcomes that the project stakeholders seek to achieve. The corresponding HIE project objectives then specify how to determine whether the goals are achieved by a particular date. (See example in Figure 2-1). Your project goals may already be documented. To ensure a comprehensive listing of your goals, consider the following questions:

- What does your project hope to gain from the electronic exchange of health information?
- What do your HIE stakeholder organizations (i.e., the institutions and individuals who will participate in the HIE organization) expect to gain from participating in the project?
- What would make your stakeholders consider the project a success?
- Are there any specific goals that your funding sources (e.g., local hospital or State funding the project) have established for your project?

Part of articulating your HIE project's goals and objectives involves assessing how well your project's stated goals support the mission of stakeholder organizations. This process of goal alignment involves ensuring that stakeholders' interests are consistent with the HIE project vision (as in the example offered in Figure 2-1). In thinking about your stakeholders' interests, consider your project's governance model and decisionmaking process. Ask yourself the following questions as you assess goal alignment.

- Which HIE project goals support the value and mission of your stakeholders?
- What role do your stakeholders play in decisionmaking?
- What measurable objectives could you use to document the accomplishment of these goals?

### Figure 2-1. Example of HIE goal versus objective and goal alignment

**Goal:** To improve the quality of care provided to patients by successfully exchanging laboratory orders and results between ambulatory care providers and laboratories in the tri-State area.

**Objective:** To exchange at least 85 percent of laboratory orders and results electronically by the end of the initial 12-month period after going live in the tri-State area.

**Example of goal alignment:** Our HIE project's focus on reducing the number of paper lab results sent by fax or mail aligns with the local hospital laboratory's interests in improving workflow, faster and more dependable return.