

## SI IT Benchmarking Survey Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL

#### **Should I enter data at the system level or at the individual hospital level?**

As a general rule, more data will be available to the system, and anonymously to other participants if data is entered at the individual hospital level. However, there are some considerations.

The most significant factor is how centrally managed the IT function is. If all hospitals are running the same software, IT is centrally budgeted, most IT support is provided centrally, there are no "shadow" IT departments or personnel at the hospital level, etc., there is little benefit to submitting data at the hospital level. With only a few exceptions, we've found that corporate IT generally doesn't have data on the "shadow" IT folks in the individual hospitals.

If there is some degree of IT independence at the hospital level (particularly with IT budgets), we recommend each hospital complete the survey tool. By doing this, we can provide you with a comparison cohort of your hospitals. You'll be able to do some internal comparisons and perhaps learn from each other's best practices. IT and hospital leadership will also gain a better understanding of their IT costs. Finally, completing the meaningful use questions at the hospital level will also provide useful information to both the system and the hospital.

If you opt to submit data at the hospital level, you can also submit data for the system offices to account for the expense of operating those offices. If you submit data in this manner, please indicate in the comments area of section 1 that the data represents the health system functions rather than the healthcare functions of the hospitals.

### SECTION 1

#### **Question 1e and f: Total / Inpatient Revenue**

##### **Should we report gross or net revenue?**

Please report gross revenue for both items.

#### **Question 1i: Number of Outpatient Visits**

##### **We only track procedures – how do we report this?**

There are two options here. The CFO or someone in the finance area may be able to provide a reasonable estimate of visits. If so, use this estimate. If not, please report procedures AND note this in the comments area for the question.

#### **Question 1l - Number of Ambulatory/Outpatient Locations**

##### **Does this include physician office locations?**

Yes, include physician offices because the expenses, capital and FTEs associated with operating the offices are included in other items. This particular number is not used for any calculations at this point. Its primary function is to serve as one of the potential factors in selecting comparison cohorts.

**Question 1m: Total Organizational FTEs**  
**Should we include contract labor in this?**

Yes, please include contract labor. This will provide consistency with collecting IT contract FTEs in Section 2.

**SECTION 2**

**Questions 2a, 2b and 2d - IT expenses, capital and employed FTEs**  
**Should we include corporate IT allocations in these numbers?**

No. To provide numbers comparable to those organizations without corporate allocations, do not include the allocations in these items. They are collected separately in items 2i, 2j, and 2k.

**SECTION 3**

**Question 3c- Paperless Supply Chain across Organization**  
**What do you mean about paperless supply chain?**

A completely paperless supply chain implies that from the point a supply item is used through payment of the vendor, all steps in the process are completed without using paper (recognizing that some vendors may not accept electronic payment). This includes inventory management, ordering, receiving, payment, documenting payment in the general ledger, etc. If you feel you're substantially paperless in this process, check yes. Note that this section is not used for any calculation. It provides information on various aspects of automation to allow for cohort selection.

**SECTION 4**

**Question 4 - Social Service Agencies, Centers (# of agencies/centers)**  
**I was wondering if you could provide some clarification the # of agencies/centers question in Section 4. Are you looking for the total number of agencies, centers we work with or only specific ones? Thanks for the clarification.**

The question is intended to capture the number of agencies supported by your IT function with the support costs absorbed in your IT budget; even if it's not a separate line item. Typically, this would be internal agency(ies) rather than community agencies you work with. (However, it is possible an IT organization may support an external agency.) Note that section 4 is one of the sections that provide information helping you select comparison groups. For example, you may only want to compare yourself with organizations where IT supports a transitional care unit, a social service agency and an inpatient behavioral health unit.