HHS IDEA LAB

HHS INNOVATOR-IN-RESIDENCE

"We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them."
— Albert Einstein

Solving the most critical challenges of today not only requires elevating our thinking, it also demands efforts to broaden our thinking to include more perspectives. Like a prism, depending on where you are standing, the ray of light looks differently, and so might the solution. Established in 2012, the HHS Innovator-in-Residence (IIR) program is a strategic problem-solving approach to leverage the understanding and expertise of different sectors to tackle a complex problem of shared interest in health and health care.

The IIR program, driven by the IDEA Lab, is a partnership in which private, not-for-profit organizations sponsor a one or two-year position to be filled by an individual with an entrepreneurial and innovative background to work on a problem of common interest to HHS and the partner organization. Persons serving as an IIR, are employees of the sponsor and participate in government activities through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA), which enables the exchange of talent between government and organizations for a wide array of practices.

Thus far, the IIR program has proven to be a true exchange that offers benefits to both HHS and the partnering organizations that include but are not limited to:

- Gaining a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of the identified problem;
- Developing a better understanding for practices and mechanisms of federal government to inform organizational practices and vice versa for HHS;
- Being part of broader, multi-stakeholder conversations around health care reform; and
- Helping to build the leaders of tomorrow in the technology and healthcare space;

To share a few concrete examples, the first IIR, Pierce Graham-Jones, sponsored by the West Health Institute, helped establish a platform for creating applications and services around CMS BlueButton enabled personal health data. This relationship helped establish many new business partners for West Health and the launch of the Center for

Medical Interoperability, a separate organization led by hospitals and health systems to help drive interoperability of medical technologies.

Nag Murty, the second IIR who was also sponsored by West Health, focused on patient engagement where he helped develop Project Sandbox, an experiment in building an engagement with models and instances of care delivery that have shown promise towards helping reduce costs while concurrently improving patient-centric outcomes. In addition, during his time in the program, Nag helped create a better infrastructure to support smarter design for the Medical House Practice program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, a home-based primary care infrastructure model to provide better care to the frail elderly. HIs work led to the establishment of a 'sandbox' for developing digital tools to develop and test tools to assess medical caregivers optimize home-based care. Through this IIR project, a joint venture for patient engagement collaboration was established between the sponsor and Medstar. This work also led to provocative discussions regarding evidence-based care measures with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

The third IIR, Adam Culbertson is sponsored by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), and is helping to develop a plan qualifying and quantifying patient matching algorithms for electronic information systems in healthcare and has helped bring new communities into research mode to address them. This has enabled the HIMSS community to develop a broader understanding that will be useful to their member organizations.

Anjelika Deogirikar, the fourth and most recent IIR is sponsored by the public health startup ORGANIZE, and will work to identify improvements in the field of organ donation and transplantation. Already, a platform has been created for the work to start and she is currently engaging stakeholder communities in shaping the project.

Finally, the IIRs coming out of this experience have been transitioning into significant leadership roles in the health technology space. Pierce is now leading a corporate, start-up level enterprise in San Francisco and Nag is starting his own business. These individuals bring very unique perspectives, their own ideas and they are going to share them, test them and move on to do important things and both partner organizations will ultimately benefit from the experience.