

National Health IT (NHIT) Week 2011:

10 Ways to Celebrate NHIT Week in Your Hometown

**National Health Information Technology Week 2011 (NHIT Week 2011)
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2011 National Health IT (NHIT) Week: 10 Ways to Celebrate NHIT Week in Your Hometown

With partners across the U.S., National Health Information Technology Week is a virtual event with various activities in communities from Maine to California. This document contains some suggestions on how you can celebrate NHIT Week in your hometown.

As a partner driven event, we envision NHIT Week to be somewhat similar to Breast Cancer Awareness Month where participants leverage the opportunity to raise awareness and help the collective cause by holding celebrations in their communities.

To this end, we've put together 10 ways you can celebrate NHIT Week in your hometown. Feel free to use one of our ideas or come up with one on your own. And tell us what you have planned and how the event turns out so we can share your success with other NHIT Week partners.

1. **Distribute a news release.** NHIT Week organizers have prepared a "Swiss cheese" release. Fill in the blanks and distribute the release to local healthcare and IT reporters, editors, and broadcast producers in your city. Add the NHIT Week logo next to your own to show this is about more than just your organization. Encourage stories about local health IT projects and investments. If you need help creating a media list, NHIT Week can help.
2. **Write an op-ed.** Draft an op-ed (700-800 words) to place in your city's newspaper. The op-ed should focus on NHIT Week and discuss why all healthcare facilities from doctors' offices to emergency rooms benefit from healthcare IT.
3. **Conduct a tour of your facility.** Another idea is to hold a tour of your facility for local and state officials, such as your Congressional representative, state legislators, or state health IT coordinator. If you are in a healthcare facility, such as a hospital, you may want to conduct a tour to illustrate how technology, specifically EHRs, are simplifying and improving the delivery of medical care in your facility.
4. **Reach out to reporters.** Include reporters in your NHIT Week efforts by arranging one-on-one appointments with journalists to brief them at their desks. Or, brief several reporters at one time by holding a media session. Serve snacks or a light meal to help entice journalists to attend the event.

5. **Host a NHIT Week seminar.** Gather state policy experts, healthcare IT professionals, and other stakeholders to hold a seminar where you provide the very latest information about healthcare IT. Invite internal employees, elected and appointed officials, the public, the media and other stakeholders.
6. **Proclaim NHIT Week.** Working with the mayor or governor's office, proclaim September 12-16, 2011 as NHIT Week in your city or state. Be sure to publicize the proclamation for maximum benefit.
7. **Promote NHIT Week internally.** To communicate with your internal stakeholders, display the NHIT Week poster in elevators, hallways, offices, cafeterias, on vending machines, bulletin boards, etc. Another way to communicate with your internal audiences may be to place an article in your organization's employee newsletter or intranet. (*Please note:* NHIT Week posters, logos, web buttons, and customizable newsletter articles are part of this toolkit.)
8. **Develop a NHIT Week social media strategy.** To help get the word out about NHIT Week, use your existing social media outlets, or establish new ones. Post a blog, tweet about NHIT Week, and highlight NHIT Week on your existing Facebook account, website, and other digital media outlets.
9. **Incorporate NHIT Week into an upcoming activity.** If your organization has an upcoming announcement or event, plan to hold it during the week of September 12-16. That way you can celebrate NHIT Week as part of the festivities. Submit your event to the official NHIT Week calendar at www.healthitweek.org by emailing nhitweek2011@gmail.com.
10. **Promote NHIT Week in your existing communications.** Add the NHIT Week logo to your email signatures and your organization's internal calendars. These are simple ways that pack a big impact to let your network and colleagues know that your organization is celebrating NHIT Week.

Distribute A News Release

Writing and distributing a news release is an easy way for your organization to participate in National Health IT Week. You can use the attached “Swiss cheese” release by filling in the blanks [in red type] to reflect your organization and your city/state.

You also may choose to draft your own NHIT Week release. **One important note**, be sure to include the name, email and phone number of a contact person from your organization at the top of the release (see the contact information in the Swiss cheese as an example).

If you choose to draft your own release, keep it to no more than two pages and include quotes from leaders in your organization. Your release should be written so that if a newspaper or website picked it up as is, it reads like a news story. That means the first paragraph, called the lead, contains information about who, what, where, why, and when of NHIT Week celebration, followed by supporting details and quotes from your organizations leaders.

After the release is drafted and approved, distribute it to journalists in your city, local region or state. To create a media list, use NHIT Week online resources [www.abcde.org]. Most of the journalists on your media lists will cover healthcare, IT, public policy or business. In smaller papers, your contact may be just the business reporter or editor.

Journalists repeatedly say they prefer email contact to telephone, so send out your release as an email message. Cut and paste the release into the body of the email since most media outlets do not permit attachments. A short paragraph (two or three lines) above the release tells the reporter why they should read the release.

Be sure to write a clear, concise subject headline since reporters say the subject line determines whether they will open your email or not. A few journalists are using social media for leads on stories but they are in the minority.

SAMPLE “SWISS CHEESE” NEWS RELEASE

[Your Organization’s Logo]

NEWS RELEASE

For Release: August 15, 2011

Contact: [Name, email, cell phone]

[Your Organization] Celebrates National Health IT Week September 12-16, 2011

[Your City, State] --Health information technology improves the quality of healthcare delivery, increases patient safety, decreases medical errors, and strengthens the interaction between patients and healthcare providers. To mark the important role health information technology plays in improving healthcare delivery in America, [Your Organization] and others across the U.S. have joined together to celebrate National Health Information Technology (NHIT) Week , September 12-16, 2011.

With the NHIT Week theme: *One Voice, One Vision: Transforming Health and Care*, [Your Organization] will hold [event or activity, date, time, place, etc.]

“Our participation in National Health IT Week highlights our organization’s commitment to ensure health information technology is integrated, interactive, interoperable, and intelligent to provide the best patient outcomes, said [Your Organization’s Spokesperson]. “By working together we can leverage the technology to promote for the betterment of our healthcare system.”

The event on [Date] will bring [Description of event activity or other celebration.]

The briefing is open to the public. Credentialed media representatives please RSVP to [Name, email, cell phone]. For additional information about National Health IT Week, visit www.healthitweek.org/.

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[About Your Organization]

About National Health Information Technology Week

Now in its fifth year, National Health IT Week is a collaborative forum assembling key healthcare constituents—vendors, provider organizations, payers, pharmaceutical/biotech companies, government agencies, industry/professional associations, research foundations, and consumer protection groups—working together to elevate national attention to the necessity of advancing health IT. Log onto www.healthitweek.org for more information.

Write an Op-ed

Abbreviated from “opposite the editorial page,” an op-ed is a newspaper article that expresses a personal opinion on an issue from an interested party. Op-ed authors are unaffiliated with the newspaper staff. In fact, an op-ed can be written by anyone – from a respected authority to a concerned citizen. Here are the steps to write and place an op-ed focused on NHIT Week:

Be familiar with the outlet’s op-ed style. Before you write your op-ed, check the media outlet’s op-ed style guide (usually posted on the website). Depending on the outlet, typically op-eds are about 700 to 800 words. Op-eds often include a local angle to make it relevant to the newspaper’s reader and on occasion, they include a call to action. Op-eds can be placed in newspaper and also in nontraditional outlets such as website like *Huffington Post* or aol.com or locally at newjersey.com (if you live in New Jersey). Allow plenty of time to place the op-ed. Since you can only approach one outlet at a time awaiting their response before proceeding to the next outlet that may take a week or two, allow four to eight weeks for placement.

- Determine the topic. An op-ed about National Health IT Week should discuss the benefits of health IT to the healthcare system and patient care, and include a local angle—how healthcare IT benefits those in your city, state or region. Feel free to be creative and use local examples and other anecdotes to illustrate your points. Tell a story about how health IT has made a difference. Some examples of NHIT Week topics might include:
 - Using a statistic or study such as the fact that Frost & Sullivan research revealed that the EHR market is expected to increase from \$1.3 billion in 2009, to \$2.6 billion in 2012.
 - Providing examples of patients that are empowered by using health IT.
 - Standardizing technology so that EHRs are truly portable.
 - Addressing patient privacy and security involved with using EHRs.
 - Adopting new laws to support the wider use of health IT.
 - Using EHRs to track disease outbreaks and public emergencies.
 - Leveraging EHRs to eliminate administrative costs and other waste.
- Identify a signatory. When writing an op-ed, the first step is to identify a signatory—someone who will sign the op-ed. The person signing the op-ed should be well respected and, if possible, well known. For example, he or she may be your organization’s CEO or CIO, a local official such as the head of your city or state’s public health system, or

an elected official such as the mayor or a congressional representative.

- Write the op-ed. When writing the op-ed, feel free to use the language from the news release (in this document) and the NHIT Week website.
- Obtain approvals. When the op-ed is written, seek approval from the signatory, your organization's leaders and other stakeholders.
- Contact the media outlet. The next step is to contact the op-ed editor where you want to publish the op-ed. Let them know that you would like to send them an op-ed to celebrate National Health IT Week and that you've included a local angle. Verify that you have the correct length of the op-ed and how, to whom and where to send it.
- Revise the op-ed. Depending upon your discussion with the media outlet representative, it may be necessary to revise the op-ed. Make the revisions and send it in. If you are sending the op-ed by email, be sure to cut and paste the op-ed into the body of the email. Do not send the op-ed as an attachment.

SAMPLES OF POTENTIAL OP-ED TOPICS

Here are a few examples of the first paragraphs of some sample op-eds.

NHIT Week Op-ed

Our nation stands on the threshold of dynamic improvements in healthcare. Great advances in health information technology (IT) and the possibility of a nationwide exchange of clinical information place true healthcare reform within national reach.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act have attempted to move the nation toward impactful healthcare reform, but true reform is impossible without system-wide adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) and nationwide health information exchange.

It is interesting to wonder about what our healthcare system might look like when health IT is fully implemented. Specifically, what the increased use of electronic medical records (EHRs) might mean to patient satisfaction.

Regional Op-ed

The Mississippi Regional Extension Center has met its target for signing up priority primary care providers (PPCPs) by hitting the 100 percent mark on May 17, 2011. The Mississippi REC took an early lead in the effort to help PPCPs on the road to meaningful use of certified electronic health record (EHR) products. Three months into the process, the REC had signed up 25 percent of its goal of 1,000 practices. And at the six-month mark, more than 600 providers were signed-up, including 220 providers associated with the state's network of community health centers (CHCs).

Policy Op-ed

Electronic health records (EHRs) can improve the quality of healthcare delivery, increase patient safety, decrease medical errors, and strengthen the interaction between patients and healthcare providers. But putting all that information online is a potential safety, privacy and security risk. To help eliminate this risk, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) has introduced the Personal Data Privacy and Security Act of 2011 designed to "establish a national standard for data breach notification, and require American businesses that collect and store consumers' sensitive personal information to safeguard that information from cyber threats."

Personal Story Op-ed

As a physician during the last 30 years, I've seen more changes in the American healthcare system than I ever imagined when I was in medical school. These changes have included new procedures such as angioplasty; pharmaceuticals like cancer drugs; medical devices like CT scanners; and new support systems such as electronic medical records. Today, there's almost no area of medicine that hasn't been touched by technology.

Many of us may have encountered a medical situation where a family member or loved one's life was saved by early detection, new drugs, or a new procedure. Contrary to these more obvious technological medical advances, health IT is quietly advancing medicine. Health IT—specifically electronic health records (EHRs)--improve the quality of healthcare delivery, increase patient safety, decrease medical errors, and strengthen the interaction between patients and healthcare providers.

This week marks National Health IT Week where [XXX] companies and organizations join together to celebrate the use and benefits of health IT. I wanted to share some of the ways that health IT has improved care for my patients.

Conduct a Tour of Your Facility

Another way to celebrate NHIT Week is to provide a tour of your facility for local and state officials, such as your congressional representative, state legislators, or state health IT coordinator, journalists that cover healthcare, IT personnel and business leaders.

If you are in a healthcare facility such as a hospital, you may want to conduct a tour to illustrate how technology, specifically Electronic Health Records (EHRs), are simplifying and improving the delivery of medical care. To set up a tour, follow these steps:

- Establish a NHIT Week event team. Internal event team members may include an events coordinator or meeting planner, a marketing communications expert, a media or community relations staff member, a manager or other leader, IT professional, and any other staff members that might enhance the planning effort.
- Hold a kick-off meeting. With the NHIT Week team in place, hold a NHIT Week kick-off meeting where you assign specific tasks to team members. Appoint an overall event manager. It is the event manager's responsibility to ensure that all team members complete their tasks, and adhere to your timeline and budget.
- Develop a timeline. Work with the appropriate team members to develop a timeline for the event. The length of the timeline will depend on the complexity of the event, but generally, the timeline should be at least eight weeks.
- Create a budget. While most of the events and activities are relatively inexpensive, there are associated costs in successfully implementing a facility tour. These costs might include signage and banners for the event, flyers, invitations, advertising, food, and the costs associated with getting the word out. These out-of-pocket costs should be reflected in a budget.
- Manage logistics. The event manager is responsible for ensuring that each team member stays on schedule to complete his or her assignments on time and within budget.
- Invite the guests. Guests for your event might include local and state officials, such as your congressional representative, state legislators, or state health IT coordinator and reporters that cover healthcare, IT or business leaders. In your invitation, highlight National Health IT Week and why it matters, and explain how the government officials will

benefit from attending (examples: learn how federal/state/local HIT investment improves the quality of care for patients in the district).

- Place follow-up calls to targeted guests. Many of the people you are inviting are busy with complicated schedules. Placing a personal call will help get your event on their radar screen.
- Submit the event to the NHIT Week calendar. Send the event and the details to the official NHIT Week calendar at www.healthitweek.org, by emailing nhitweek2011@gmail.com. Please note whether it's open to the public or by invitation only.
- Hold the event. Once the planning is complete, it's time to hold the event. Be sure that all of your team members know their roles and responsibilities—especially your IT professionals.
- Report the results to NHIT Week organizers. We'd love to hear all about your success so be sure to let us know how it went. Send an email to nhitweek2011@gmail.com or Amanda Sina Griffith, Amanda@bumblepr.com.

Reach Out to Reporters

One way to get the word out about NHIT Week is to let journalists know about your participation, so they in turn can tell consumers. Here are two ways to reach out effectively to reporters.

1. Hold a media briefing. If you have at least five to 10 reporters, editors or producers that might be interested in hearing about NHIT Week and a discussion about the latest development in healthcare IT, you might hold a media briefing.

To invite the appropriate journalists, send them a personalized invitation by email and follow the email with a call. It is best to invite as many reporters as possible. For example, if you want 10 to attend, you might invite 100. Be sure to invite appropriate reporters, editors and producers—those that cover IT and technology, business, public policy and healthcare.

The briefing should feature a light meal (a continental breakfast or a deli lunch works great) and feature your IT professional, records manager and medical director and perhaps a willing patient discussing the latest in EHRs and the benefits your facility has achieved by implementing health IT.

2. Conduct desk-side briefings. If you have less than five reporters, editors or producers interested in NHIT Week, you might consider desk side briefings. A desk side briefing is a one-to-one appointment with journalists to brief them in their office.

To arrange desk side briefings, send the journalist a personalized invitation by email and follow the email with a call. Invite as many reporters as cover the relevant topics (IT and technology, business, policy and healthcare).

You can determine whether a media briefing or desk side appointments are more appropriate based on the number of responses you get to your invitation.

Whatever type of media event you decide to hold, be sure to have a set agenda for the discussion so you make the best use of the reporters' time. Provide data such as statistics, and suggest possible news stories in your discussion.

Host a NHIT Week Seminar

Hosting a seminar in your hometown that presents the newest information about healthcare IT is another way your organization can celebrate National Health IT Week. Here are the steps to planning and implementing a successful seminar:

- Identify experts. Before taking the first step in hosting your seminar, you need to determine who will deliver the seminar. Will it be delivered by a panel of experts or one person? Is your company's CEO or CIO the best person to deliver the seminar? Or maybe the author of a book about healthcare IT the best person to present the information? Once you determine who will present the seminar, you can decide on the seminar topic. You may want to partner with other organizations or academics in your community. A panel of diverse participants might include an IT specialist, a clinician, a patient, and/or a policy expert.
- Choose a topic. The topic of the seminar needs to be focused on healthcare IT and appeal to a wide audience. Whatever your organization's particular niche or expertise, that's the topic you should discuss at your seminar. Perhaps your organization can talk about the newest software or demonstrate how EHRs work. A seminar will not only succeed in positioning your organization as an expert in healthcare IT, but also provide relevant information to the public, the media and other stakeholders.
- Create an invitation list. Determine the people you will invite to the seminar. Some of those you might want to include are state policy experts, healthcare IT professionals, board of directors' members, related professional organizations, the press, and other stakeholders. Invite more people than you think will come and be sure to invite those in your own organization.
- Submit the event to the official NHIT Week calendar at www.healthitweek.org by emailing nhitweek2011@gmail.com. Please note whether it's open to the public or by invitation only.
- Develop the seminar presentation. The first step in developing your presentation is to create an outline that reflects the information in your seminar. Once refined, the outline can be turned into a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation. PPT makes it easy for the seminar participants to follow the seminar's main ideas without having to take copious notes. Today, most organizations post their PPT presentations on their websites after the seminar so that interested individuals can view it.

- Practice the presentation. While your organization may have experts delivering the seminar, it's always helpful to practice. This is particularly true when there is more than one person involved. Practice will polish even the most experienced presenter.
- Appoint a professional to handle logistics. Appoint one person to handle the seminar logistics including finding an appropriate room, branding, sending out the invitations, etc. The main coordinator can be supplemented with communication experts to make sure you get the word out to your targeted audiences.
- Brand the seminar. Be sure that you have appropriate signage with both your organization and NHIT Week logos. These branding elements should appear on signs directing the attendees to the room, the welcome table, the podium, and on a backdrop.
- Welcome participants. Whether you have a sign in table, or people at the door of the room, make sure you greet attendees so everyone knows they are at the right place and feels welcomed.
- Follow-up with participants. After the seminar, make sure that you follow up with the participants thanking them for attending. If there are reporters attending your seminar, contact them following the seminar to be sure they have what they need to write a story.

Proclaim NHIT Week

To encourage your city and state officials to show their support for NHIT Week, you can organize to have your city or state proclaim a celebration of NHIT Week. The proclamation, typically issued by your city's mayor or state's governor, provides your organization with something to promote as part of **[Your organization's]** NHIT Week festivities. Here are the steps to take to get a proclamation in your city or state.

- Determine whether you want a city or state proclamation. Work with your internal NHIT Week leadership team to decide whether you would prefer a city or state proclamation.
- Allow yourself enough time. Getting a proclamation takes at least eight weeks. Allow yourself enough time to contact the appropriate authorities, follow the government process and promote the proclamation.
- Contact the official's office. Start by contacting the mayor or governor's office. While some offices may have a staff member exclusively devoted to proclamations, other staff members who may be of assistance include a public relations practitioner, communication officer, or an office manager.
- Work through the process. Following the directions of your contact, go through the process step-by-step as they suggest. This will streamline the proclamation process and assure that you get the proclamation before NHIT Week.
- Promote the proclamation. Once you have obtained the proclamation, publicize it as part of NHIT Week. Send out a press release, tweet, write a blog, send an email to your internal audiences, and include it in your internal newsletter.

Promote NHIT Week Internally

Let your internal audiences—employees, board of directors' members, vendors, and other stakeholders—know about your organization's participation in NHIT Week. Here are several ways to tell your colleagues:

- Display posters. Hang the NHIT Week poster provided by NHIT Week leaders in your facility. These posters may be displayed in elevators, hallways, offices, cafeterias, on office bulletin boards, on vending machines, etc.
- Promote NHIT Week in your newsletter. Place an article in your organization's newsletter. You can write an article yourself or use the customizable newsletter article available in this toolkit.
- Leverage your organization's digital media tools. Your organization may have a place online where staff members post updates about projects. These digital tools may include an intranet system, internal email, or message boards. Use these existing tools to update your internal audiences about your NHIT Week plans.
- Update employees at staff meetings. Whether you mention NHIT Week at an all-staff meeting or department gathering, discussing how your organization plans to celebrate NHIT Week will get your staff enthused and engaged about the festivities. Be sure to include your organization's NHIT Week plans on your staff meeting agendas.
- Encourage your staff to get involved. When people are involved in planning or executing an event, they get excited about the activities. Whether it's volunteering to help with event logistics, welcoming guests at a seminar, or setting up the room, there is a place for all staff members to lend a hand and get involved.

SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

[Your organization] will join with more than [xxx] organizations to celebrate National Health Information Technology Week. Set for September 12-16, 2011, nonprofit organizations, suppliers, healthcare facilities, congressional leaders, state and local officials, and other stakeholders from across the country are joining together to bring attention to the role of healthcare IT in improving healthcare delivery.

Health information technology improves the quality of healthcare delivery, increases patient safety, decreases medical errors, and strengthens the interaction between patients and healthcare providers.

To mark the important role health information technology plays in improving healthcare delivery in America, [Your organization] will be participating in the following ways [list the activities your organization is doing for NHIT Week].

Develop a NHIT Week Social Media Strategy

Many organizations have incorporated social media (digital) strategy as part of their communications outreach to their target audiences. Whether you leverage existing digital media or set up new social media accounts just for NHIT Week, here are some suggestions to promote your organization's NHIT Week activities.

- Highlight NHIT Week on your website. Everyone has a website that presents the face of the organization to internal audiences and the public. This is a great place to promote your organization's involvement in NHIT Week. You also could set up a microsite (website within a website) where you can place articles, stories and activity descriptions about how your organization is celebrating NHIT Week.
- Draft a blog. A blog (web log) is written by an individual and includes regular entries of commentary, opinion, descriptions of events, and may include graphics or video. Many organizations have blogs authored by an organization leader. Write a blog entry that discusses how your organization is celebrating NHIT Week or highlights the benefits of health IT. You also may consider writing a series of blogs about NHIT Week.
- Tweet about NHIT Week. Using an existing Twitter account or establishing a new one (www.twitter.com), start sending out tweets discussing ways to celebrate NHIT Week in your city and how healthcare IT simplifies healthcare delivery. Be sure to promote your tweets through emails, newsletters, blogs, etc.
- Promote NHIT Week on Facebook and LinkedIn. If your organization has a Facebook fan page (for nonprofits, companies and other businesses) and/or a LinkedIn group, you can promote NHIT Week on those sites. Update your Facebook site to let your "friends" know your organization's plans for NHIT Week, and encourage them to participate too by visiting www.healthitweek.org.
- Be creative. As mentioned previously, you can use existing sites such as microsites or intranet communications to promote NHIT Week. Also, consider partnering with others, such as coalitions or regional professional organizations, to promote NHIT Week. If you decide to do a video of your NHIT Week celebration, post it to YouTube.

Incorporate NHIT Week into an Upcoming Activity

If your organization has an upcoming announcement or an event, plan to hold it during the week of September 12-16. That way you can celebrate NHIT Week as part of the festivities.

During your event, carve out five minutes to highlight your organization's participation in NHIT Week. If possible, have an organization leader (CEO, CIO) discuss the benefits of health IT and how your organization is one of [xxx] partners across the U.S. participating in NHIT Week.

When promoting your event through newsletters, press releases, emails, social media, face-to-face communications, etc., be sure to add a line about your organization's participation in NHIT Week.

If possible, brand the event as part of NHIT Week with a podium sign and/or backdrop.

Promote NHIT Week in Your Existing Communications

There are many quick and easy ways you can promote NHIT Week in all your communications and outreach efforts. Here are a few easy to implement suggestions:

- Add NHIT Week to your email signature. You send more emails than you probably realize. By noting your organization's involvement in NHIT Week, you are promoting the Week, as well as your organization's commitment to health IT. The addition to your email signature could be something as simple as:

***Celebrating National Health IT Week, September 12-16, 2011.
[Incorporate the NHIT Week logo.]***

- Use existing internal communications. Promote NHIT Week internally by posting NHIT Week posters on bulletin boards, and placing a note about NHIT Week in your organization's internal calendars, newsletter or email alerts. This is an easy way for you to notify others of your organization's involvement in NHIT Week. The note can be something such as:

[Your organization] is celebrating National Health IT Week, September 12-16, 2011. You may want to include the NHIT Week logo.

- Include information on print communications. When sending out a news release, marketing letter or other print communications to external audiences, you can add the line:

***Celebrating National Health IT Week, September 12-16, 2011.
[Incorporate the NHIT Week logo.]***

These are simple ways that pack a big impact to let your network and colleagues know that your organization is among those celebrating NHIT Week.