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TRAVERSE CITY — Doctors from around the state will gather at Northwestern Michigan College's Hagerty Center on Saturday to discuss a new model for doctors and patients.

The model focuses on creating patient-centered medical homes, facilities that coordinate care between patients' primary care providers and other medical specialists.

It could mean transitioning the industry's current payment system from one that pays per-service, to one that pays for value, said Marie Jannausch-Hooper, executive director of the Northern Physicians Organization.

"'Fee-for-value' is (finding) what's the most appropriate care, and it's trying to fit our thinking as a society and community to prevention and wellness," she said. "It's really about growing all of our knowledge, best practices and evidence base regarding chronic disease."

Jannausch-Hooper said much of the symposium will center on a new technology that improves that communication. She calls it "the registry." It's a tool for patients and physicians to share notes, which hopefully leads to efficient care and better health. It can be used by physicians and specialists who track electronic medical records with different technology.

Twenty-two local doctors are testing the registry, including Abbigale Wilson, who practices at Bay Area Family Care in Traverse City.

Wilson said the ability to share information with her patients' other providers cuts down on work because they can share test results, prescription history and other information.

"If you can cut down on the clicks and the faxing it can really add up," Wilson said. "It can probably save an hour throughout the day."

Wilson said updates to the registry improved privacy — patients can prevent some providers from seeing mental health history and patients transitioning from adolescent to adult can keep some information private. Patients can choose if they want their information on the registry.

Wilson said local physicians should learn about the registry and seek training to use it to see how it can be helpful before deciding whether to use the tool.

The more widespread the registry's use, the easier it will be to share information.

"It feels like turning a large ship in the bay," Jannausch-Hooper said. "It's incremental, but we have to start somewhere."