This poster presents a case study of a best practice at our program: the integration of health informatics (HI) throughout our health administration (MHA) curriculum.

For more than 25 years, our MHA students have been required to take two health informatics and one quality improvement course: Introduction to Health Informatics (1st or 3rd semester), Decision Making for Health Care Organizations (2nd semester), and Decision Support in Health Care Systems (4th semester).

Healthcare managers and leaders play integral roles in both quality and process improvement (QI/PI) due to changes in how healthcare organizations are paid. To prepare students to assume key roles, we integrated three primary learning outcomes in our Decision Making for Health Care Organizations course:

1. Use of core QI/PI methods and tools;
2. Use of Microsoft Excel and Access in data analysis/management in QI/PI applications; and
3. Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification by an independent organization.

The use of IT healthcare is integrated throughout the MHA:

1st Semester – Introduction to the US Health Care System (health information technology), Administration of Health Care Organizations (knowledge management, quality improvement);
2nd Semester – Health Economics (health technology assessment), Managerial Epidemiology (population health, managing data for research, planning, management, and policy);
Summer – Field Experience in Health Management and Informatics;
3rd Semester – Introduction to HI
4th Semester – Decision Support in Health Care Systems; Capstone Projects
Many students select additional health informatics courses in HMI as electives.

All MHA students complete capstone projects addressing problems in health care organizations. Students develop data-collection protocols, analyze data, draw conclusions, and develop recommendations using research methods and tools including process analysis and improvement techniques such as PDSA, Lean, and Six-Sigma. Most apply health informatics knowledge/skills in their capstone projects.

Integrating HI into the MHA curriculum offers students necessary knowledge and skills for success in a dynamic job market.

Many MHA students concurrently pursue dual degrees or graduate certificates in HI

Healthcare administration is even more challenging without competence in HI. Our experience offers one successful path for HI integration that other programs could follow.