

Privacy and Security Solutions for Interoperable Health Information Exchange

Ohio Interim Implementation Plan Report - March 28, 2007

Executive Summary

With the goal of facilitating effective exchange of health information to improve healthcare quality, Ohio has focused stakeholder discussion on privacy and security barriers to health information exchange (HIE), potential solutions, best practices and specific strategies to implement these solutions. The findings in this report are predicated on the key assumption that timely, comprehensive, patient centric, accurate and complete clinical information should be available to all health care providers at the point of care for any patient regardless of insurance coverage, economic or social status. The limitations Ohio has identified will be mirrored in the findings of other states as many of strategies presume preparatory work on the national level. This report is provided with contextual parameters including limited national standards/guidelines, and at the state level a new governor, significant changes in state leadership at multiple levels, and a biennium budget cycle which begins July 1, 2007. Only solutions and implementation plans for barriers over which the state has control are reviewed.

- In response to the general barrier of limited standards at the national level, Ohio proposes to establish a permanent state level quasi-governmental organization to monitor consistent implementation of national standards, and where necessary to develop state standards. The HISPC Governor's Steering Committee will serve in an interim capacity, determining specific responsibilities and functions of the state level group, and finalizing legal structure and membership of the ongoing group.
- In response to the general barrier of limited funding at all levels, Ohio proposes to view the issue of basic electronic connectivity as a resource akin to a public utility, which should be provided, as an extension of Ohio's Third Frontier initiative, by the state in order to have basic tools in place to ensure access to health information exchange particularly to rural areas of the state.
- Additionally, in response to the general barrier of limited funding at all levels, Ohio proposes to require use of national standards such as the Continuity of Care Record for any publicly funded HIT/HIE projects, and to leverage the purchasing power of the state as health care provider to model this practice.
- In response to the barrier that some federal and state laws related to the use and disclosure of health information related to Medicaid, mental health, substance abuse and specific diseases are more restrictive than HIPAA, Ohio proposes to use the Continuity of Care Record standard as a minimum data set. Using such a national standard as the basis for the permissible exchange of diagnostic and medications data, pertaining to Medicaid, mental health, substance abuse and specific diseases will facilitate HIE to ensure that a comprehensive record is available to authorized providers at point of service, facilitating quality of care for all Ohioans.
- In response to the general barrier of needing to balance providing both privacy and security of information while at the same time insuring quality of care resultant from have a comprehensive set of information available at point of care, Ohio proposes implementation of consistent privacy and security business practices with monitoring at multiple levels, and a public education campaign that will inform Ohio citizens about current laws and business practices to both protect privacy and improve quality of care through health information exchange.