

Updated Federal Health IT Strategic Plan Focuses on Interoperability

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The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) within HHS, this week released its new strategic plan detailing efforts to promote interoperability of health records and systems.

The **new plan** recognizes the strides made in the area of electronic health records adoption by US providers and takes these efforts a step further to facilitate the sharing of health data. Over 400,000 hospitals and professionals now participate in Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs, generating a strong demand for information sharing.

ONC lays out the following five goals to advance accessibility of health information and make it available when and where it is needed to improve and protect people's health and well-being:

- Expand adoption of Health IT
- Advance, secure and interoperable health information
- Strengthen health care delivery
- Advance the health and well-being of individuals and communities
- Advance research scientific knowledge and innovation

Each goal is supported by two to three specific objectives with three and six year expected outcomes, along with strategies for achieving each objective. Additionally, the goals and objectives of the federal health IT plan will be implemented and supported by 37 federal departments and agencies. The plan is a coordination of these agencies in order to advance the collection, sharing, and use of electronic health information to improve health care, individual and community health, and research

ONC is also in the process of developing a Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap to drive the goals of the strategic plan.

The strategic plan promotes health IT adoption and information sharing among the commercial market as well as government entities. Implementation of the plan will involve establishing standards and frameworks for information exchange. One way for contractors to influence these standards is to participate on committees, boards, and other organizations to influence their development. Private and public health organizations may need contractor assistance in adopting and incorporating resulting information exchange architectures, standards, and frameworks.

Public comments will be accepted on the plan until 5 pm on February 6, 2015.