



Position Statement National Health Information Infrastructure (NHII)

Call To Action

Healthcare represents one of the critical infrastructures within our Nation. The healthcare community's ability to deliver the best possible care relies on the caregiver's expertise coupled with access to information about the patient. In today's world, there exists an unacceptable disconnect between the caregiver and the patient's medical record.

Currently, no access of medical information on individual or groups of patients is available nationwide. In fact, very few communities can boast that their healthcare facilities can electronically exchange information – and many healthcare organizations still cannot even exchange information within the bounds of a single organization.. Researchers have traditionally relied on medical claims data for analysis; until recently, claims data were the only comprehensive data sets available. Now, other clinical data sources are emerging and tools from informatics are necessary to access them.

With the goal of connecting health delivery organizations, clinicians, public health professionals and the public to sound information, HIMSS provides a leadership role in the effort to create a National Health Information Infrastructure, as envisioned by the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics.

HIMSS' Position

HIMSS advocates the rapid deployment of technologies, standards, practices, processes, laws, and regulations necessary to implement a National Health Information Infrastructure.

- HIMSS supports a central NHII office reporting directly to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services with the necessary staffing and funding to fulfill the goals of the NHII
- HIMSS believes that the *Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise* (IHE) initiative must be a key funded component of the NHII because it uses proven methodologies to create broadly accepted, vendor neutral framework based on existing standards to pass vital health information seamlessly from application to application, system to system, and setting to setting within and across the entire healthcare enterprise.
- HIMSS seeks collaborators at the national, state, and local levels within the private sector to document and share recommended standards, best practices, and case studies resulting in a blueprint for the National Health Information Infrastructure
- HIMSS serves as a convener of all interested parties within the public and private sector to promote, educate, advance and eventually implement an NHII
- HIMSS commits its resources as an integral leader to championing the development, acceptance and deployment of effective, interoperable technologies that exchange secure

health information between the three dimensions of the National Health Information Infrastructure (personal health, healthcare provider, and the population health)

- HIMSS urges the industry to promote the discussion of the need for a personal standardized health identifier
- HIMSS calls on the federal government to pass federal legislation to protect the privacy of health information associated with a standard personal health identifier

HIMSS agrees it may take up to ten years to achieve the 'complete' NHII in all elements of the healthcare industry- this ultimate goal should continue to be used and tracked. In addition, HIMSS suggests defining intermediate goals and timeframes that would deliver key elements of the NHII and create a critical mass of functionality. The intermediate goals should focus on NHII elements that are achievable in shorter timeframes, are necessary to build momentum and core functionality, and on industry segments with the capability to utilize and benefit from these elements.

Approved by the HIMSS Board of Directors, April, 2003