



**Health IT Policy Committee Meeting**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**December 15, 2009**

[Meeting Agenda](#)

**Overview:**

- Dr. Blumenthal opened the discussion by stating that the much anticipated regulatory processes on Meaningful Use and Certification Criteria and Standards for Meaningful Use are continuing. All indications are that they will be released in the very near future. Government is precluded from getting more specific on release dates for regulations.
- The HIT Policy Committee was established by Congress to look at the entire health IT landscape. To date, most activity has been focused on the Meaningful Use definition. The December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting is an opportunity for the HIT Policy Committee to move beyond Meaningful Use and begin to address some of the other pressing policy imperatives that will help the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) advance adoption of health IT and encourage exchange of health information in an electronic format.

**Update on Meaningful Use Notice of Proposed Rule Making, Certification Criteria and Standards for Meaningful Use, and HHS Certification Interim Final Rules:**

- **Proposed Rule on Meaningful Use:** CMS is still on track to release the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Meaningful Use in the coming weeks. CMS representative Tony Trenkle indicated that the public will have a 60-day comment period. CMS will have a short turnaround window for reviewing comments and releasing the final rule.
- **Certification Criteria and Standards for Meaningful Use:** ONC has a statutory requirement to release the Interim Final Rule by December 31, 2009. All indications are that ONC will meet the deadline, and that ONC will employ a 60-day public comment period.
- **HHS Certification Process:** ONC has been discussing an HHS Certification Process since July 2009. Based on [Dr. Blumenthal's Blog](#) from December 7<sup>th</sup>, it appears the Interim Final Rule will be released for public comment in early January 2010. The length of the time to respond has not been determined.

**Overview of ONC Reorganization and Priorities:**

- Dr. Blumenthal discussed the [reorganization at ONC](#). He stated that the reorganization is intended to bring ONC closer into alignment with the responsibilities identified in the HITECH provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, including ensuring an 1) Improved clinical health outcomes 2) Improved population health outcomes 3) Increased efficiency in the healthcare system 4) Empowered individuals and 5) Learning Health Care System.
- Dr. Blumenthal cited an increased budget and policy priority as the root of the necessary expansion, including an expectation that the office would grow from the 33 full time employees on staff in April 2009 to over 100 employees in the future.

- He also suggested that the ONC staff, including the Office of the Chief Scientist, Deputy National Coordinator for Operations, Office of the Chief Privacy Officer, Deputy National Coordinator for Programs & Policy, and Office of Economic Modeling and Analysis, will be focused on four subcomponents to Meaningful Use, including Exchange & Enhanced Uses, Adoption, a Pathway for Exchange, and Trusted and Effective EHRs. Many staff will carry over to new positions, while ONC expands to address the many statutory requirements.
- Overall, Dr. Blumenthal foresees a time when the State Level HIEs, Regional Extension Centers, Community College Workforce Training Centers, and Beacon Communities provide a coordinated effort to address ONCs responsibilities from item #1.

**Meaningful Use Workgroup:**

- The [Meaningful Use Workgroup outlined its timeline](#) for beginning work on post 2011 Meaningful Use requirements. Although a lot is contingent on the Meaningful Use regulation, Dr. Paul Tang suggested that information gathering would occur in large part during the early months of 2010, with a strong focus on patient and family engagement in a nationwide health information network. The workgroup will be conducting a field hearing on the subject in February 2010.

**Information Exchange Workgroup:**

- A considerable amount of discussion occurred on the [recommendations by the Information Exchange Workgroup on Standardizing Electronic Laboratory Transactions](#). The overall interest was in confirming the HIT Standards Committee activities and the recommendations on laboratory requirements for meaningful use with a request to identify the acceptable messaging and vocabulary standards for laboratory transactions.
- The discussion included the identification of three recommended goals and critical issues. The third column below identifies the resolution Dr. Blumenthal negotiated during the conversation.

Goals	Critical Issues	Recommendation	Resolution
1. Laboratory results must be transmitted and incorporated into EHR using nationally defined messaging and vocabulary standards, by 2011.	Which Vocabulary and Messaging Standards Should Be Required?	ONC should require national standards for messaging, vocab, and measure codes, and create means for widespread availability of authorized implementation guides and code-sets.	ONC and CMS will review and attempt to address in the upcoming regulations or in subsequent vehicles.
2. Laboratory orders must be transmitted and incorporated into hospital HIS/LIS systems using nationally defined messaging and vocabulary standards, by 2013.	How will these standards be monitored and enforced?	Establish enforcement mechanisms for EHR and Hospitals labs.  Establish enforcement mechanisms for Laboratories.  Align federal and state rules and enforcement procedures.	Tabled until a later HIT Policy Committee meeting. Likely in January 2010.



		Establish procedures for monitoring and enforcement of laboratories.  Enforce and enhance federal contractual and subregulatory provisions.	
3. Patient must have prompt access to their laboratory results, by 2011	How to enhance patients' ability to get prompt communication of lab results?	HIT Policy Committee should consider whether the CMS Meaningful Use rule in 2011 and ONC interim final standards rule facilitate patient receipt of lab results.	Tabled until a later HIT Policy Committee meeting. Likely in January 2010. Dr. Blumenthal made reference to Josh Seidman, formerly of the <a href="#">Center for Information Therapy</a> , has joined the ONC staff to address consumer issues.

#### **Certification and Adoption Workgroup:**

- Comments were centered around the issues of adoption and certification of electronic health records. Members commended the activities of the Policy Committee to improve the national dialogue on an HHS Certification. In addition, there was anecdotal information that EHR adoption was on the rise based on the Committee's activities.
- Workgroup anticipates focusing more resources and effort on adoption and implementation. They anticipate incorporating the policy recommendations into the guidelines for the Regional Extension Centers and Beacon Communities.

#### **NHIN Workgroup:**

- Workgroup members David Lansky and Danny Weitzner presented that general outline of the new NHIN workgroup's [expected focus areas](#).
- In general, they will "create a set of recommendations for a policy and technical framework that allows the internet to be used for the secure and standards-based exchange of health information in a way that is both open to all and fosters innovation." They expect to provide an initial set of recommendations to the HIT Policy Committee in January after two public hearings, the first of which was scheduled for Washington, DC on [December 16, 2009](#).
- The workgroup has identified the foundational components of the NHIN as
  - a. Vocabulary standards
  - b. Document/ Message Standards
  - c. Directories and certificates



- d. Delivery protocols
- e. Authentication
- f. Security and trust relationship
- The Workgroup will focus its initial inquiry on directories, with a particular focus on push function that directories provide for data exchange between a sender and recipient.
- The second meeting in January 2010 will be to discuss authentication issues. HIMSS will look to provide details on our authentication initiatives to the Workgroup in time for the public hearing in January.

**Privacy and Security Policy Workgroup:**

- Workgroup members Deven McGraw and Rachel Block presented the general outline of the Privacy and Security Workgroup in a [presentation](#) that highlighted the broad charge of making “recommendations to the Health IT Policy Committee on privacy and security policies and practices that will help build public trust in health information technology and electronic health information exchange.”
- The workgroup will seek to recommend solutions that enhance privacy and security, “ while also facilitating the appropriate access, use and exchange of health information to improve health outcomes.”

**Strategic Plan Workgroup:**

- The Strategic Plan Workgroup [presented a timeline](#) for updating the ONC Strategic Plan, which includes collaborating with federal partners, engaging the public in a dialogue, and publishing a final product in time for the October 2010 statutory deadline.
- General themes will include
  - a. Promoting meaningful use of Health IT
  - b. Leveraging information and technology to support a learning health system
  - c. Establishing privacy and security policies supporting public trust and participation in health information exchange
  - d. Establishing policies for a technical infrastructure supporting electronic health information capture and exchange

**Health Plans Discussion:**

- The afternoon discussion started with a [conversation on Health Plans and the NHIN](#). Presentations by [Availity](#), [Ingenix](#), [WellPoint](#), [Kaiser Permanente](#), and [Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield](#), which each provided current examples of health data exchange that might be useful to the development of the NHIN. General themes included identifying a sustainability model that works across care settings; leveraging provider experiences using health IT for business and administrative functions of healthcare, and improving provider acceptance and involvement by ensuring electronic health records are integrated with provider workflow.

**HIT Standards Committee Update:**

- The final presentations of the day were from the HIT Standards Committee. First, [Dr. Dixie Baker presented](#) on observations from the Security hearing they conducted in November 2009. Dr. Baker made reference to the [2009 HIMSS Security Survey](#) and encouraged the HIT Policy



Committee members to pay close attention to security issues as they moved forward on policy recommendations.

- [Secretary Aneesh Chopra](#), Chief Technology Officer of the United States, presented a summary of the HIT Standards Committee's public hearing from November, including ten recommendations that many HIT Standards Committee members supported making the Committee's working principles. The [recommendations](#) centered around keeping the process simple and understandable for the entire healthcare community – patient, provider, big and small companies. Secretary Chopra closed his presentation by emphasizing that innovation and cybersecurity are two components of the Obama Administration's initiative to broaden health IT adoption amongst providers.
- The HIT Standards Committee will conduct their next meeting on December 18, 2009 from 9-12 p.m. Eastern. The meeting will be a [phone-only public conversation](#).

