



Brief Facts

on the

Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT

Federal Information Technology Strategic Plan 2011-2015

“We are committed to promoting electronic health information as the “lifeblood” of modern health care.” – National Coordinator, David Blumenthal, M.D., M.P.P.

Background: The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) was established by Executive Order in April 2004. The [first ONC Strategic Plan](#) was released in July 2004 and established the ONC focus on provider adoption, interconnecting providers, and leveraging health IT to support improvements in population health. Following a series of initiatives associated with creating the foundation for the Nationwide Health Information Network, the Health IT Standards Panel’s work on standards harmonization, and the Certification Commission for Health IT (CCHIT) certification process, ONC released an update to the Strategic Plan in June 2008.

Following passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ONC was required by the law’s HITECH provisions Section 3001(c)(3) to update and publish a [collaborative Federal Health IT Strategy](#). The submission of this strategy plan, and request for public comment is intended to meet the requirements of the legislation.

In addition, given the important role health IT has in establishing the foundation for healthcare transformation, the new Strategic Plan incorporates goals and milestones associated with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA), the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA), and the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA).

Finally, as a commitment to promoting electronic health information, the Strategic Plan emphasizes the necessity of a standards-based approach to information sharing.

Purpose: Congress intended the Strategic Plan to provide an updated roadmap for federal health IT initiatives. From a policy perspective, it allows ONC to exercise its function as the national

coordinator to ensure federal health IT initiatives optimize cross-agency resources that can support improving the quality and cost effectiveness of care delivery in all care settings that receive federal funding.

The Strategic Plan takes a global perspective on leveraging the care delivery, insurance programs, and health IT deployment experiences at the Indian Health Service, Department of Defense, and Department of Veterans Affairs.t

Outline of Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, and Strategies: The Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 has identified five goal themes with associated objectives and strategies.

- **Goal #1: Achieve Adoption and Information Exchange through Meaningful Use of Health IT**
 - Includes 3 Objectives and 15 Strategies aimed at improving adoption rates and preparedness for Meaningful Use
 - **Objective A:** Accelerate adoption of electronic health records – highlights current activities associated with the Medicare and Medicaid EHRs Incentive Programs, Regional Extension Centers, Usability improvements, Community College and University-Based Training, the HHS Certification Process, and federal agency care delivery initiatives.
 - ONC also mentions that private sector payers are beginning to provide incentive payments similar to the Meaningful Use program
 - **Objective B:** Facilitate information exchange to support MU – acknowledges that interoperability and information exchange will be critical to later Stages of Meaningful Use. The government will be putting in place activities to support sustainability models for health information exchange, expanding on programs like NwHIN Direct and CONNECT, and expands on the goals of the standards and interoperability (S&I) Framework and the metadata suggestions in the PCAST Report.
 - **Objective C:** Support adoption and information exchange for public health and unique communities – public health data sharing, reduce health disparities, and take advantage of initiatives in the Affordable Care Act to encourage health IT adoption in long-term, post acute, emergency, and behavioral health settings.
 - Includes an observation that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and ONC will seek to create EHRs incentives for behavioral health care settings.

- Includes a suggestion that ONC and ASPR may find ways to tie policies and standards for data to be received and used in the emergency care setting.
- Goal #2: Improve Care, Improve Population Health, and Reduce Health Care Costs through the Use of Health IT
 - Includes 4 Objectives and 9 Strategies to support the large number of federal laws that have been passed in recent years to improve healthcare quality (ACA, ARRA, CHIPRA, MIPPA, etc.)
 - Objective A: Support improved sophistication of EHRs to support health system improvement – focuses efforts on quality measures in Meaningful Use, HIT Resource Center best practice sharing, and CHIPRA Demonstrations; highlights HHS decisions on administrative efficiencies like ICD-10, and meets the requirements identified in ACA Section 1561 for eligibility and enrollment efficiencies between federal, state, and local human services programs.
 - Objective B: Better manage care delivery through the use of EHRs-generated reporting measures – Aligning initiatives with the National Health Care Quality Strategy and Plan; establishing standards and certification criteria for Meaningful Use, and building e-measures that are reportable through EHRs.
 - Objective C: Demonstrate health IT-enabled payment, clinical practice, and population health management reforms – Utilizing lessons from Beacon Communities, provisions from the ACA, and lessons from DoD, VA, and Indian Health Service contracts with private sector IT companies, provider networks, and payers.
 - Objective D: Support IT breakthroughs in research, public health, and national health security – leverage provisions in the ACA to improve health promotion, prevention, and health security.
 - Recognizes the role health IT must have in the ACA requirement for a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy, which is being developed by the CDC and other HHS agencies
 - Encourages the development of a mechanism for sharing research results to speed change in guidelines and care delivery models.
- Goal #3: Inspire Confidence and Trust in Health IT
 - Includes 3 Objectives and 11 Strategies to protect privacy, security, and confidentiality, while improving consumer and public confidence in the use of health IT to support care transformation.
 - Objective A: Protect confidentiality, integrity, and availability of health information – leverages updates to HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules from the HITECH provisions of the ARRA.

- Calls for the enforcement of existing federal laws and regulations and maintenance of a consistent federal policy
 - Supports the incorporation of privacy and security functionality in health IT, and the identification of solutions to existing vulnerabilities
 - Objective B: Inform individuals of rights and increase transparency on uses of protected health information – ensure patients and caregivers understand changes to the law, and make breach notification easy to receive and understand
 - Objective C: Improve safety and effectiveness of health IT – utilizing workflow redesign, the IOM investigation, and monitoring activities to improve outcomes associated with EHRs.
- Goal #4: Empower Individuals with Health IT to Improve their Health and the Health Care System
 - Includes 3 Objectives and 8 Strategies to leverage health IT to engage patients as active participants in their healthcare.
 - Objective A: Engage individuals with health IT – ensure healthcare consumers have access to inform policy development
 - Objective B: Accelerate individual and caregiver access to their health information in usable and reusable formats – leveraging Meaningful Use requirements, DoD, VA, and Indian Health Service care delivery systems, and public policy to ensure the patient has access to the information at the point of care.
 - Objective C: Integrate patient-generated information and consumer health IT with clinical applications to ensure patient is center of their care – utilizes standards development and regulatory change to ensure the patient has a role in the collection and maintenance of health information.
 - Supports the use of consumer-directed health IT applications to support four domains of the National Health Care Quality Strategy and Plan and the expected National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy
 - Four quality improvement domains that will be utilized include
 - Self-management/motivation
 - Honoring patient preferences and shared decision making
 - Patient health outcomes
 - Community resources coordination/ connection
- Goal #5: Achieve Rapid Learning and Technological Advancement
 - Includes 2 Objectives and 9 Strategies to foster the learning health system through innovation and research to continually promote solutions that support improved care outcomes.

- Objective A: Lead the creation of a learning health system to support quality, research, and public and population health – FDA, CDC, and ASPE are involved in efforts to provide surveillance for patient safety and patient-centered research initiatives
 - Intent is to engage patients, providers, researchers, and other institutions to ensure information exchanges leads to improvements
- Objective B: Broaden the capacity of health IT through innovation and research – Intends to “liberate health data” to foster innovation, while utilizing resources such as the SHARP grants to get funding to innovators.
 - HHS expects to foster further innovation through federal initiatives at DoD, VA, Indian Health Service, and other agencies.

Appendices provide background information on performance measures, statutes and regulations that impact health IT, and an excellent list of current federally-sponsored health IT programs and initiatives.

Next Steps:

Public Comment Period: The Office of the National Coordinator for Health announced in the [March 25th Health IT Buzz](#) that they are seeking public comment on the Strategic Plan by April 22, 2011. A revising Strategic Plan will be published following review of the public comments. HIMSS members who are interested in participating in a cross-HIMSS review and comment is encouraged to send an email to advocacy@himss.org. To receive more information, please contact [Tom Leary](#), HIMSS Senior Director of Federal Affairs, at 703-562-8814.