IMMUNIZATION INTEGRATION
PROGRAM

FAQs

In collaboration with:

Chickasaw Nation Industries
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HiMSS

ICSAlabs
An Independent Division of Verizon

FAQs – Immunization Integration Program

1. What is the Immunization Integration Program?

The Immunization Integration Program (IIP) – a collaborative effort between Chickasaw Nation Industries, Inc. (CNI), HIMSS and ICSA Labs – takes immunization workflow mainstream, streamlining and improving the overall vaccine administration and management process.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) has contracted with CNI to identify electronic health record (EHR) and other clinical software capabilities that will help clinicians and other immunization providers improve immunization rates, as well as develop and implement methods that will support the voluntary adoption of these capabilities within EHRs and other clinical software in the U.S.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of such work has been completed, yielding a number of tools that will support the implementation of a non-regulatory program that will advance the use of immunization-related capabilities within EHRs and other clinical software.

In September 2015, CDC awarded CNI a contract for Phase 3. The primary purpose of Phase 3 is to support the publication and widespread dissemination and implementation of the immunization-related software capabilities and related testing tools developed in Phases 1 and 2.

The primary goal of the CDC-funded program is to increase the integration of immunization-related capabilities within clinical software. Such integration is expected to improve immunization rates by making it easier for clinicians to administer appropriate vaccines, increase knowledge and acceptance of immunizations among patients and caregivers, and improve safety and tracking of vaccines. Improved immunization rates are linked to better health outcomes, reductions in healthcare costs, and higher levels of productivity.

2. How does the Immunization Integration Program work?

The Immunization Integration Program will advance the integration of immunization-related capabilities within EHRs and other clinical software through the following:

- *Identifying, raising awareness of, and driving the adoption of software capabilities that will help improve the administration and management of immunizations*
- *Developing and supporting the use of testing tools designed to help software vendors demonstrate the inclusion of immunization-related capabilities within their software*
- *Recognizing those software products that contain immunization-related capabilities*

3. Who is launching the Immunization Integration Program?

HIMSS and ICSA Labs have joined forces with CNI to make the immunization-related capabilities, guidance, and related testing tools available for use among clinicians and other immunization providers, EHR and other software developers, and others who are in a position to drive adoption, including immunization information systems, payers, and patient groups.

4. What is the overall timeline for the Immunization Integration Program?

This multi-phase project began in 2013, resulting in multiple deliverables designed to advance the integration of

immunization-related capabilities in EHRs and other clinical software. Key outcomes to date, along with expected outcomes of the program in Phase 3, are summarized on the next page.

Phase I: Identified Immunization-Related Software Capabilities (2013-2014)

- *Literature Review*
- *Interviews with Experts and Stakeholders*
- *Draft Immunization-Related Capabilities*

Phase II: Developed Plans and Tools for Implementation (2014-2015)

- *Final Immunization-Related Capabilities and Related Guidance for Publication*
- *Test Plans and Test Scripts to Support Validation of Capabilities in EHRs and Other Clinical Software*
- *Stakeholder Assessment of Value of Capabilities and Related Testing Program Through Online Survey*
- *Governance Plan*
- *Implementation Plan*
- *Communications and Dissemination Plan*

Phase III: Immunization Integration (2015-2016)

- *Significant Awareness of the Availability of Immunization-Related Capabilities and Related Testing Tools Among Clinicians and Software Developers*
- *Use of Testing Tools Among EHR and Other Clinical Software Developers*
- *Methods for Validating Inclusion of Capabilities Within Software*
- *Revised Capabilities and Testing Tools Incorporating User Input*

DURING THIS FINAL PHASE, THE COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS WILL:

- *Publish and disseminate immunization-related software capabilities and testing tools*
- *Raise awareness of the importance of integrating immunization-related capabilities into health IT*
- *Engage software developers in using these tools to assess compliance of their health IT*
- *Implement an independent process for validating immunization-related capabilities within health IT*
- *Gain input from users on their implementation experiences*

6. What is the governance model for the Immunization Integration Program?

Working with CNI, HIMSS and ICSA Labs will leverage their proven business experience and existing relationships with providers, clinicians, consumers, manufacturers, and federal, state and local governments to raise awareness of the availability of immunization-related software capabilities and testing tools and drive their widespread use. An Immunization Integration Program Technical Advisory Panel is being established to review user input to improve the immunization-related capabilities, guidance, and testing tools and determine methods for their ongoing maintenance.

7. How will the Immunization Integration Program reflect broad stakeholder input?

The immunization-related software capabilities were developed with extensive input from clinicians and other immunization providers, EHR and other clinical software developers, immunization information systems, and payers.

Input was obtained through working sessions, more than 60 interviews, and an online survey involving such stakeholders. CNI also teamed with several commercial EHR vendors to both assess the inclusion of such capabilities in commercial software and pilot the testing tools. The Technical Advisory Panel that was charged with reviewing user input to improve the capabilities and related testing tools will also represent a wide range of stakeholders, including those summarized above.

8. What are the benefits of the Immunization Integration Program for healthcare providers?

Immunization providers include clinicians, public health and retail clinics, and employers that provide vaccines.

The Immunization Integration Program allows healthcare providers to provide better patient care by managing immunizations more effectively and efficiently. In addition, the IIP will help:

- *Increase immunization rates among patients, and provide vaccination histories and information to patients and their caregivers more efficiently*
- *Improve workflow and reduce the burden associated with administrative tasks – including reporting on immunization-related performance measures*
- *Transmit data to local registries*
- *Improve vaccine tracking to help manage costs and inventory*

In addition, health IT systems that function well are critical especially when addressing infectious diseases. Working with disparate health IT systems that are tested for integration gives various stakeholders confidence that the immunization-related information they are handling is accurate and timely.

9. What are the benefits for EHR and other clinical software developers to pursue the Immunization Integration Program?

The Immunization Integration Program allows EHR and other clinical software developers to better understand and respond to specific clinician-driven workflows and needs. Through the IIP, they can demonstrate focus not only on compliance – but also on additional outcomes-related benefits to both clinicians/providers and patients.

In addition, these developers and vendors can better develop and implement software changes necessary to increase immunization rates, and improve workflow and patient care. With the IIP, EHR and other clinical software developers have the ability to incorporate new functions that will improve both preventive and population health, and improve their responses to non-regulatory recognition programs.

10. What are the benefits of the Immunization Integration Program for the immunization information system (IIS) community?

The Immunization Integration Program allows public health entities, IIS leaders and IIS vendors to better meet their goals of increasing and tracking immunization rates. They can increase the effectiveness of interventions that improve outcomes – such as provider reminders, provider assessment and feedback processes, and patient reminders.

The IIP also will help improve the timeliness, and the quality and accuracy of immunization information transmitted to and from clinicians/providers.

11. Who are the potential incentive providers, and what is their role in the IIP?

Organizations in a position to provide incentives include:

- *Federal agencies*

- *Health plans*

- *Consumer advocacy groups*

- *Health information exchanges (HIEs)*

- *Certification and accreditation bodies*

The IIP allows these organizations to align incentive payments more accurately with performance (improved outcomes) through the use of EHRs and other clinical software with immunization-related capabilities. They can also gain more accurate measurements of immunization rates from multiple settings in which vaccines are administered and from various modes of payment.

12. How does the Immunization Integration Program align with ONC's vision of interoperability?

The tests in this program do not cover interoperability in its entirety. The tests cover what stakeholders do with the immunization information they receive, such as how to collect it, what to send, and what happens to that information within the EHR. Some components involve sending data to the NIST standard registry, which is already linked with the immunization registry through the ONC program. Improving the tests in Phase 3 of this project is one goal of this collaborative effort.

13. How do I learn more about the Immunization Integration Program?

Visit **www.himssinnovationcenter.org/immunizationhit** for more information.

About Chickasaw Nation Industries, Inc.

Chickasaw Nation Industries, Inc. (CNI) is a rapidly-growing small business that provides world class management consulting, information technology, and project management services for government agencies. Certified as an 8(a) small, disadvantaged business in 2012, CNI has nearly 200 employees, $15M in annual revenues, and has successfully completed more than 100 consulting projects and task order contracts. While we offer solutions across a range of subject matter areas, we have a strong focus on government healthcare and health information technology (IT). Many of our staff members are nationally-recognized experts in areas such as electronic health records (EHRs) and other types of clinical software, ONC's Meaningful Use program, the Federal Health Architecture, interoperability, FACA facilitation and coordination, health IT system usability, and the design, development, and implementation of health IT systems.

About HIMSS North America

HIMSS North America, a business unit within HIMSS, positively transforms health and healthcare through the best use of information technology in the United States and Canada. As a cause-based non-profit, HIMSS North America provides thought leadership, community building, professional development, public policy, and events. HIMSS North America represents 64,000 individual members, 640 corporate members, and over 450 non-profit organizations. Thousands of volunteers work with HIMSS to improve the quality, cost-effectiveness, access, and value of healthcare through IT. Major initiatives within HIMSS North America include the **HIMSS Annual Conference & Exhibition**, **National Health IT Week**, **HIMSS Innovation Center, HIMSS Interoperability Showcases**™, **HIMSS Health IT Value Suite**, and **ConCert by HIMSS**™.

About ICSA Labs

ICSA Labs, an independent division of Verizon, has been providing credible, independent, third-party product assurance for end-users and enterprises since 1989. ICSA Labs provides third-party testing and certification of security and health IT products, as well as network-connected devices, to measure product compliance, reliability and performance for many of the world's top technology vendors.