

New York Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (NYHISPC)

New York Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (NYHISPC) is a statewide initiative to examine privacy and security related laws, policies and business practices that impact electronic health information exchange, and to develop practical solutions to support the private and secure exchange of health information. Supported with federal funding, NYHISPC will be led by a steering committee of diverse thought leaders and will engage a wide range of stakeholders in a collaborative process towards solutions development.

Background

Mounting evidence indicates that health information technology has the potential improve quality, lower health care costs, and prevent medical errors. On April 27, 2004, the President issued an executive order announcing his commitment to ensuring the widespread adoption of interoperable electronic health records (EHRs) to allow health information to follow patients throughout their care in a seamless and secure manner.

To develop the building blocks necessary to realize widespread interoperable EHR adoption, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has launched four public-private initiatives:

- **Standards Harmonization** will create and evaluate processes for harmonizing health information standards for data exchange;
- **EHR Compliance Certification** will develop criteria to certify and evaluate health IT products;
- **Privacy and Security Solutions** will develop solutions to address variations in business policies and state laws that affect privacy and security practices that may pose challenges to the secure communication of health information; and
- **Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN)** will develop prototype architectures for nationwide health information exchange.

Each initiative will deliver reports to the American Health Information Community (the Community), a new federal advisory committee that is chaired by Secretary Leavitt and charged with providing recommendations to HHS on how to make health records digital and interoperable.

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Workable privacy and security approaches are imperative for comprehensive information exchange. The Privacy and Security Solutions initiative seeks to develop solutions to facilitate the secure exchange of health information to support quality improvement, medical error reduction, timely public health surveillance, rigorous research, and improved efficiency and affordability of health care. The central component of this initiative is the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC). Spearheaded nationally by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and the National Governor's Association (NGA) under a grant from HHS, HISPC

seeks to engage states in seeking practical solutions to privacy and security needs in interoperable health IT.

New York State and local governments have launched numerous initiatives to provide support for health IT adoption and use and to encourage health information exchange. For example, New York is currently in the process of distributing \$52 million in funding from the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL-NY) to support the development of clinical information exchange projects, the creations of electronic prescribing capabilities and the use of electronic medical records across the state. New York also is home to multiple emerging health information exchange projects across the state. It is therefore both appropriate and timely that New York has been chosen as to launch a state project under HISPC.

NYHISPC will provide an important opportunity to advance the understanding of how state and federal laws and organization-level business practices impact the privacy and security of health information exchange. Specifically, NYHISPC will engage public and private sector health care stakeholders statewide to

- Examine privacy and security policies and business practices regarding electronic health information exchange and the current legal requirements in the state that may be driving those policies.
- Identify challenges that privacy and security policies might pose to interoperable health information exchange.
- Identify best practices and solutions for maintaining privacy and security protections while enabling operation of a health information network.
- Develop an implementation plan to address organization-level business practices and state laws that affect privacy and security practices in order to permit interoperable health information exchange.

The project will be launched in June, 2006 and will culminate in a report to be released in February, 2007.

NYHISPC will be led by a statewide steering committee of diverse thought leaders in healthcare, business and privacy policy. A wide range of stakeholders in the state also will be engaged, including clinicians, physician groups, health facilities and hospitals, payers, public health agencies, government health agencies, pharmacies, long-term care facilities and nursing homes, and consumer organizations. The project will be directed by William Schroth, New York State Department of Health; William S. Bernstein of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP and Janlori Goldman of Columbia University and staffed by an interdisciplinary team from the New York State Department of Health; Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP; Columbia University; Syracuse University, CalRHIO and Object Health. For more information about NYHISPC contact Ellen Flink at (518) 408-1234.