



New Program to Simplify Digital Health Data Exchange, Making it Easier for Healthcare Providers to Get Connected Health IT

HIMSS, IHE USA and the EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup announce plan to streamline and strengthen how electronic health records and health information exchanges share patient data

CHICAGO and NEW YORK CITY (November 17, 2014) – Health information technology customers expect products to work efficiently and consistently - whether it's a Wi-Fi connection for a computer or the ability to securely share health data across computer systems, states or regions.

Building on its current effort to connect electronic health records (EHRs) to health information exchanges (HIEs), the [EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup \(IWG\)](#) has formed a strategic relationship with [HIMSS](#) and [Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise \(IHE\) USA](#) to streamline the process for achieving connectivity between EHR and HIE systems. This alliance will strengthen IWG's current program to test and certify EHRs and HIE vendors to enable reliable transfer of data within and across organizational and state boundaries. [ICSA Labs](#) has been selected as the testing and certification body for this effort.

The value of this collaboration affects more than half the U.S. population and their health care providers who will now have the ability to securely access health data that is shared across multiple states and systems. Working together, these organizations want to make sure that healthcare providers implementing health IT solutions buy products that are interoperable with other software products.

“This joint effort will help pave the way for health information to be exchanged seamlessly between systems, allowing clinicians and health systems to more easily and securely share patient data,” said **Dave Whitlinger, Executive Director of the New York-eHealth Collaborative, the coordinator of the Statewide Health Information Network of New York**. “By making it easier for electronic health record systems to communicate, this new collaboration will help fulfill the promise of health information exchange, improving patient care and lowering healthcare costs.”

The EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup is a New York-led consortium of 19 forward-thinking states and 47 leading EHR and HIE vendors that was formed in 2011 to increase the adoption of EHRs and HIE services by eliminating the significant “interface” cost and time barrier.

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The [New York eHealth Collaborative \(NYeC\)](#) created, led, and financed the IWG whose members work together to develop integrated EHR capabilities so that data sharing across and between states and health IT systems will be more compatible.

This effort builds on and accelerates consensus on national standards, adopting EHR certification criteria and testing procedures as relevant for Stage 2 Meaningful Use. The collaboration will continue to provide feedback to the national health IT standard-setting initiatives established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).

“Both IWG and IHE USA have worked independently with notable accomplishments. However, the consolidation of our efforts, along with the commitment of these organizations, offers the most promise to create a real, lasting impact and make interoperability a reality in healthcare,” said **Joyce Sensmeier, MS, RN-BC, CPHIMS, FHIMSS, FAAN, president of IHE USA.**

Sensmeier explained the contributions of the four organizations, noting the expected synergies of the collaboration.

- IWG offers the specifications, a robust, automated testing tool, and significant workgroup membership of states and vendors;
- IHE USA brings specifications that form the foundation of interoperability, industry expertise and support, and experience in system-to-system and product testing;
- HIMSS is known for its consistent convening strength, public policy channels, stakeholder representation and sector support; and,
- ICSA Labs, the testing and certification body chosen for this program, provides expert health IT analysts, and a proven testing and certification framework.

“HIMSS, IWG and IHE USA recognize the definitive power of collaboration to reach our shared vision for robust, secure and interoperable health information exchange. This new program builds on current activities to certify EHR and HIE products that are able to reliably transfer data within and across organizational and state boundaries,” said **Carla Smith, MA, CNM, FHIMSS, Executive Vice President, HIMSS North America.**

[Learn more about this new testing and certification program on the IWG website.](#)

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About The New York eHealth Collaborative (NYeC)

NYeC is a not-for-profit organization, working in partnership with the New York State Department of Health to improve healthcare for all New Yorkers through health information technology (health IT). Founded in 2006 by healthcare leaders, NYeC receives funding from state and federal grants to serve as the focal point for health IT in the State of New York. NYeC works to develop policies and standards, to assist healthcare providers in making the shift to electronic health records, and to coordinate the creation of the [Statewide Health Information Network of New York](#) (SHIN-NY), a network to connect healthcare providers statewide. For more information about NYeC, visit www.nyehealth.org and [@NYeHealth](#).

About IHE USA

IHE USA (www.iheusa.org) is a 501.c.3 not for profit organization founded in 2010. Its vision is to improve the quality, value, and safety of healthcare by enabling rapid, scalable, and secure access to health information at the point of care. IHE USA operates as a national deployment committee of IHE International® in order to advance its mission to improve U.S. healthcare by promoting the adoption and use of IHE and other world-class standards, tools, and services for interoperability. IHE USA engages all levels of public and private sector participants to test, implement, and use standards-based solutions for all health information needs.

About HIMSS

HIMSS is a global, cause-based, not-for-profit organization focused on better health through information technology (IT). HIMSS leads efforts to optimize health engagements and care outcomes using information technology. HIMSS is a cause-based, global enterprise producing health IT thought leadership, education, events, market research and media services around the world. Founded in 1961, HIMSS encompasses more than 52,000 individuals, of which more than two-thirds work in healthcare provider, governmental and not-for-profit organizations across the globe, plus over 600 corporations and 250 not-for-profit partner organizations, that share this cause. HIMSS, headquartered in Chicago, serves the global health IT community with additional offices in the United States, Europe, and Asia.

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