

Response to the NHIN Workgroup
Submitted by the Federation of State Medical Boards
December 11, 2009

- *What is the scope of service, content, structure, and business model of your directory services?*

The Federation of State Medical Boards is a national non-profit organization whose members are the seventy (70) state medical licensing and disciplinary boards of the U.S. and its Territories.

The FSMB's Physician Data Center is a comprehensive repository of physician licensing and disciplinary information. The Physician Data Center receives data directly from state medical boards, the Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, the United States Medical Licensing Examination, Drug Enforcement Administration, and international medical licensing authorities. Incoming data is cleansed, matched against other physician data that is contained within a database.

The data collected includes provider specific information on MD's, DO's, and physician assistants. With more than one million records, this nationally-consolidated data bank of US providers is used to supply state medical boards and health care credentialing entities, such as hospitals, payors, government agencies, and certifying organizations, with disciplinary actions dating from the 1960's. The information is also available to the public via the internet.

The content housed in the Physician Data Center includes:

- Biographical Data (name, date of birth, social security number, medical school, year of graduation, and gender);
- Contact information (address, phone number, e-mail which is geocoded with demographic data);*
- Licensure status; and
- Specialty certification.

The business model is based on the FSMB's unique relationship with member state medical boards and is dependent upon data sharing between state medical boards and the FSMB. The services are provided at no cost to state

* Currently, not all records include contact information.

medical boards and are supported, in part, from commercial customers and consumers.

- *Based on your experience, how should directory services be governed and operated?*

Generally, governance of the directory services should be within the purview of the data contributors with shared mission(s) and interests.

- *If your directories are not currently used to facilitate information exchange, what challenges do you see in making them available for this purpose?*

The FSMB Physician Data Center exists for the exchange of information.

- *If your directories are currently used to facilitate information exchange as part of a proprietary network, could you imagine making your directory available as a service to other organizations? Could you imagine using a public directory instead of your internal one?*

The FSMB currently exchanges data with a number of partner and stakeholder organizations. It is unlikely that the FSMB would utilize a public directory in lieu of the Physician Data Center.

- *Is it feasible to aim for universal authoritative directories, or should we accept the reality of multiple, fragmented and overlapping directories?*

With an ultimate aim of universal authoritative directories, it will be necessary to leverage the expertise and content of existing, varying and/or overlapping directories.

If there were authoritative directories of providers, would other institutions (including vendors, health plans, and other organizations) integrate such

Other health care institutions could potentially integrate directory services into their current and/or future business relationships if they believed these directories would ultimately allow them to further their business objectives.

- *What institutions could support these directory lists? What will be required for these institutions to be trusted with the policy, technical, and administrative tasks? What are your views on the broader “trust fabric”?*

It is critical that supporting institutions have shared interests and compatible missions. In order to possess the necessary “trust fabric”, the institutions supporting the directory should be not-for-profit without commercial interests or a governmental body that is free from political intervention. The key personnel of the institutions must be viewed as knowledgeable, technically

competent and having no commercial ties to any party that would use the directory.

Optional Issues

1. *How might forms of credentialing and identity management be managed through directory services?*

Identity management could be administered through web services for authentication and authorization.

2. *What standards issues must be addressed to achieve more effective use of directory services?*

Important standards issues include, but are not necessarily limited to, data usage, privacy, security, and requirements of authentication.