TEFCA™ Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement

TEFCA and
Public Health

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy created TEFCA to make more health information available electronically to appropriate organizations and individuals who need it – *including public health agencies.*

The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement™ (TEFCA™) is a framework for health information sharing across the United States.

Among its many benefits for healthcare, it will make it possible for you as a **public health agency** to receive case reports and request health records electronically from healthcare providers, other public health agencies, pharmacies, laboratories, and other TEFCA-connected organizations.

TEFCA accomplishes this by providing a baseline of rules and technical requirements for connecting existing health information networks (HINs) to each other, including the networks that public health agencies participate in. Much in the same way we can speak to others across different mobile phone carriers, and banks can share information through the ATM network, TEFCA delivers a nationwide solution to promote secure network-to-network data sharing across HINs.

Benefits for Public Health

Faster Reporting: Healthcare providers will be able to submit reportable conditions and diseases to public health agencies directly from within their health IT systems – typically through their electronic health records (EHRs) – which will be much quicker than current reporting processes.

More Effective Case Validation with Less Effort: You will be able to electronically send requests for information when cases are submitted to your agency. You will also be able to ask for information from multiple providers simultaneously – such as if a patient was hospitalized and when – through electronic queries of EHR systems versus phone calls and faxes.

Less Technical and Legal Complexity: You will be able to share data across the TEFCA network-of-networks, knowing that all TEFCA-connected organizations have agreed to the same rules for sharing and protecting data.

Promoting Public Health and CDC's Public Health Data Strategy

CDC U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has outlined four core goals as part of its Public Health Data Strategy. TEFCA directly supports each of these goals by providing secure and rapid electronic access to medical data for public health.

Goal 1:
Strengthen the core of public health data.

Goal 2:
Accelerate access to analytic and automated solutions to support public health investigations and advance health equity.

Goal 3:
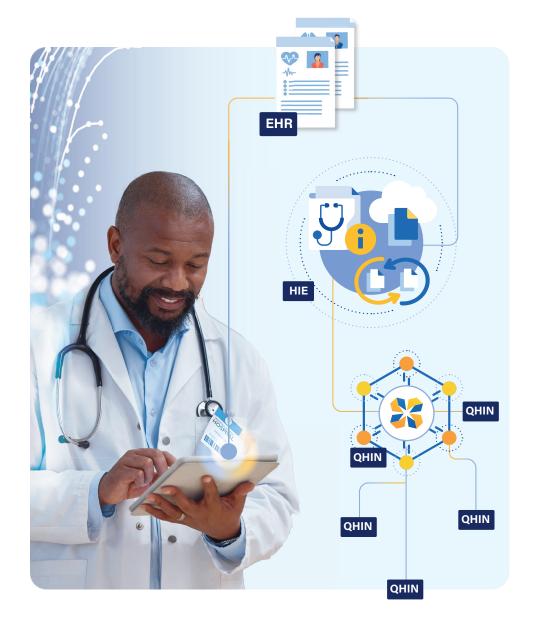Visualize and share insights to inform public health action.

Goal 4:
Advance more open and interoperable public health data.

How TEFCA Operates

Large health information networks are volunteering to serve as the backbone for connectivity across the country to support TEFCA exchange. These networks are called Qualified Health Information Networks™ (QHINs™). Each QHIN represents dozens or even hundreds of health systems, HINs, federal care providers, public health agencies, payers, and health IT vendors.

To become a QHIN, a network must pass rigorous technology and security testing, and agree to the same rules of engagement for themselves and their members. Any organization participating in one QHIN can query and receive data from members of any other QHIN.

EHR

HIE

QHIN

QHIN

QHIN

QHIN

QHIN

Connect to TEFCA Exchange

To participate in TEFCA exchange, your agency will need to sign a TEFCA Framework Agreement with one of the following:

- **A Qualified Health Information Network (QHIN)**
- **A QHIN Participant (i.e., an organization connected to a QHIN)**
- **A QHIN Subparticipant (i.e., an organization connected to a Participant)**

Ask your HIN if it is already participating in TEFCA to determine your next steps.

Become a part of the future of health data sharing across the United States!

To learn more, visit www.HealthIT.gov/TEFCA.