

**Health Information Technology Standards Committee  
Final  
Summary of the May 26, 2010, Meeting**

**KEY TOPICS**

**1. Call to Order**

Judy Sparrow, Office of the National Coordinator (ONC), welcomed participants to the 13th meeting of the HIT Standards Committee (HITSC). She reminded the participants that this was a Federal Advisory Committee meeting, with an opportunity for the public to make comments. Following her opening comments, she conducted roll call.

**2. Overview of the Meeting**

HITSC Chair Jonathan Perlin welcomed the group to this virtual meeting, and noted changes to the agenda. Given the large volume of activity with the ONC and the HIT Policy Committee (HITPC), it was felt that an update from Doug Fridsma of ONC would be beneficial.

HITSC Co-Chair John Halamka reiterated that the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) Direct is a project, not a product. In working on various state-level HIE activities, he noted that he hears a great deal of confusion about NHIN Direct. Some believe it to be a panacea that will replace many of the efforts already underway, but this is not the case. NHIN Direct is a well-circumscribed project that has a set of codes that should help facilitate and guide future efforts. NHIN Direct will plug back into a standard set of processes, and create four potential project architectures. It will examine functionality, security requirements, and business value activities. A number of HITSC workgroups, plus additional workgroups as necessary, will perform oversight to NHIN Direct.

John Halamka explained that there are three separate privacy and security workgroups functioning within the HITSC, HITPC, and the NHIN project. Close coordination across all of these areas is necessary, to avoid groups working in vacuums or silos. A Tiger Team will be formed to coordinate these efforts over the next 6 months.

He also noted the administrative work related to the enrollment transaction, which needs to be carried out on a very tight timeline. The new Enrollment Workgroup is chaired by Aneesh Chopra and Sam Karp, and its membership will include HITSC and HITPC members, as well as other industry experts from outside these committees. All of this will soon be run through the National Health Information Model (NHIM) framework. It is important that the HITSC be involved in the entire framework, ensuring that the process is sound and that deliverables are reviewed.

**Action Item #1:** Minutes from the last HITSC meeting, held on April 28, 2010, were approved by consensus.

### 3. ONC Reports

Doug Fridsma explained that this meeting represents a shift to address and improve communication between ONC and the HITSC, and to leverage the expertise that exists within the Committee. In the health care reform legislation, the HITSC is mentioned by name as the organization that will review and recommend the standards for consolidating transactions.

Doug Fridsma provided an update on the SNI framework. The ONC has issued Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and has identified 8 out of 11 anticipated contracts, with three others still in process. All of those contracts have to fit together, and ONC will not announce or award the contracts in a piecemeal fashion (all will be announced/awarded at the same time). The process was delayed because a portion of the funding was held up by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB wanted to understand how all of those contracts would interact with ongoing activities—the ONC subsequently wrote up a business case to demonstrate how all of these pieces fit together. OMB has reviewed the business case, and it is anticipated that within 1-2 weeks, the ONC should be able to finish the contract award process. The ONC is developing a high-level view of how these contracts will work together and fit within ONC initiatives. As part of this concept of operations effort, HITSC members will be presented with additional details at the next HITSC meeting asked to provide feedback as ONC identifies issues and points at which strategy, policy, and operations level decisions will have to be made.

Doug Fridsma asked that copies of all the RFPs be sent out to each Committee member. John Halamka noted that he would post any useful public information from these on his blog.

Arien Malec of ONC discussed NHIN Direct. The next step in this initiative is to conduct a review of the NHIN Direct activities by HITSC members. Many are confused about the NHIN Direct project's output and what happens to the initiative after it is complete. The output of NHIN Direct will not automatically become a standard. It is only a work product, and such pilot projects will not automatically become a part of the NHIN. There needs to be a standardized process for deciding what standards become part of the NHIN framework. This Committee will be engaged in reviewing the standards that are being worked on via NHIN Direct.

Teams of experts are writing code in an attempt to develop real-world solutions for the meaningful use challenges and problems. There are four primary “contenders” that have emerged and could serve as effective approaches to solving the core use cases that are constrained amount meaningful use. HITSC and other input regarding the value of these respective approaches would be beneficial.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- John Halamka asked about what the best way to review the standards being considered by NHIN Direct. These standards may end up being a mix of privacy and security, operations, and other issues. Who would be the best experts to join such a review effort? NHIN Direct has done such an effective job in reaching out to the community that it is having difficulty identifying qualified reviewers who are not already working on the project.
- Wes Rishel noted that NHIN Direct leadership will need to ensure that the overall project is consistent with policy requirements and has not inadvertently ignored security-related needs. Some of the experts that would be most suitable for reviewing the policy and security issues

may be able to help by looking at the four alternatives, but may not necessarily be as familiar about the aspects of those alternatives that are not related to security and policy.

- Doug Fridsma clarified that with regard to privacy and security, NHIN Direct is engaging with the various workgroups that function within the HITPC. They are developing a process regarding policy oversight, and efforts will be made not to conflict with this activity.
- In response to a question, Arien Malec explained that NHIN Direct coordinated early on with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and care must be taken to ensure that NIST is part of the implementation group and is engaged in the process (this will be especially helpful when/if the project is handed back to NIST).
- Joy Pritts of ONC noted that privacy and security is a cross-cutting issue, and announced that the Office does have the funding to provide full-time staffing for a newly comprised to address privacy and security issues. The team will combine HITPC's Privacy and Security Policy Workgroup, the NHIN Privacy and Security Workgroup, members of the HITPC Information Exchange Workgroup, and the HITSC Privacy and Security Workgroup. The NHIN Direct effort also should feed into this process in a coordinated manner.
- It was noted that some policy issues are also a part of technical evaluation. Dixie Baker emphasized that they cannot be examined separately. Jodi Daniel reiterated that this new will focus only on privacy and security issues, not on NHIN Direct as a whole.
- Dixie Baker asked about the distinction between the NHIN Direct "project" and real development. This project is producing four modules of open-source software (i.e., real product). She indicated that she would discuss the link to the new tiger team with John Halamka.

**Action Item #2:** Dixie Baker will head up an initial technical examination of the NHIN Direct. Within the next few days, artifacts will get packed up for review, Judy Sparrow will collect the names of those willing to participate, and a technology review will be carried out and submitted to the newly formed tiger team before June 11.

#### **4. Clinical Quality Workgroup**

Janet Corrigan presented an update on the steps that the Clinical Quality Workgroup is taking towards identifying 2013 Meaningful Use measures. She discussed the variety of ways in which the group is going to identify and collect likely 2013 measures:

- An environmental scan that includes 12 health systems plus registries (e-measures for which HIT tools play an important role in facilitating rapid improvement as well as e-measures for which HIT alone is inadequate to facilitate improvement and significant workflow redesign is required).
- A request to vendors for a measure list.

- Measure suggestions submitted during the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking public comment period.
- Other pertinent convening activities (e.g., National Quality Forum [NQF] agenda-setting process for measure development, Beacon Community input, and NPP workgroups).
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services national strategy and priorities process.

Alternative paths for identifying measures are to consider appropriate items, or similar items, in the NQF pipeline, and to use rapid cycle measure development and testing. Next steps include the following:

- Synthesize input on potential 2013 measures from various sources and identify options for generating these measures.
- Share results with the HITPC and HITSC, and post the results for public comment.
- Identify 2013 measure priorities at the September HITPC meeting.
- The HITSC will recommend measures that align with HITPC's priorities.
- The ONC will identify candidate measures, and DHHS will initiate a process for generating measures within the requisite time period.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- In response to a question, Janet Corrigan reported that the timing of the Clinical Quality Workgroup's efforts is improving. For 2011 measures, the specification development has been at the back end, to retrofit measures. For 2013, the hope is that their work will be at the front end. There will still be challenges, but she hopes the Workgroup is laying out a timeline that is realistic.
- Aneesh Chopra asked if there will be methods by which doctors out in the field can examine the measures. Janet Corrigan explained that doctors will be able to participate in the public comment period. Additionally, all of the outreach involves physicians and other clinicians from the front line. The environmental scan is looking at 12 health systems that are technologically advanced. The measures identification activities over the summer are sponsored by a variety of groups, and will have a reach into many areas of the community. Also, there is a small group charged with receiving input from numerous clinicians to synthesize information relating to longitudinal episodes.
- Walter Suarez asked whether the measures that did not make it into the final 2011 pool would be one of the sources of 2013 measures. Janet Corrigan indicated that they would want to consider these, but it depends in part on the approach the HITPC takes in identifying its priorities for 2013.

- Janet Corrigan explained that testing and validation of measures has to occur before they are approved, although she recognizes that in reality there will be some retrofitting. What hampers these discussions is that the cost of measure development and testing is currently borne by a variety of private-sector groups.
- Carol Diamond noted that they are used to doing testing and validation on the front end, but they have never had to roll out so many at once. She suggested that there will be many opportunities to learn and evaluate those measures after they are widely deployed that may not present themselves in the initial process (e.g., an ongoing process of deciding which measures may not be serving their purpose any longer, which need to be sunsetted, replaced, etc.). Also, it is important to raise funding issues in order to engage a community of implementers who can help with evaluation prior to field deployment.

## **5. Implementation Workgroup**

Aneesh Chopra commented that one of the key goals of the Implementation Workgroup is to serve a librarian-like function by creating a platform for organizations looking for information on how to get standards for meaningful use. The Workgroup is actively engaged in the RFP process that was discussed earlier. The key message on the implementation side is that when this procurement activity is complete, there will be a resource on which this Workgroup can advise.

With regard to the recently assigned enrollment activities, Aneesh Chopra explained that the amount of paperwork needed to apply for Medicare and other programs has been frustrating and inefficient. Within the next 180 days, the Workgroup will focus on interoperability and security standards for enrollment opportunities for federal and state human services recipients. The key provisions will be the electronic documents that are needed and how to capture eligibility information and allow for the re-use of that information. Aneesh Chopra and Sam Karp will co-chair this effort, and they are asking those who wish to serve to let Jonathan Perlin or John Halamka know of their interest. The first meeting will be on June 14; Judy Sparrow will coordinate the list of those interested.

## **6. Privacy and Security Workgroup**

Dixie Baker noted that the Privacy and Security Workgroup is continuing its educational sessions on current standardization activities relating to consent management. The next session will be held on June 17, and will deal with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) pilot of HL7 Consent Directives and OASIS Cross-Enterprise Security and Privacy Authorization (XSPA) and eXtensible Access Control Markup Language (XACML). She presented a slide showing a diagram of the consent directives implementation pilot.

Dixie Baker updated the Committee on Workgroup efforts related to policy support, as follows:

- Provided input to Health Information Technology Policy Committee (HITPC) regarding privacy and security policy needs.
- Joy Pritts updated the Workgroup on ONC's plan to create a Privacy and Security Task Force, under HITPC, to work intensively over the summer to define privacy and security policy to be applied consistently across ONC projects and programs. The Workgroup encouraged the involvement of technical experts in the Task Force and offered support.

Privacy and Security Workgroup efforts to consider and recommend standards, implementation specifications, and certification criteria will play into pending policy decisions from the new Task Force.

## **10. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

**Action Item #1:** Minutes from the last HITSC meeting, held on April 28, 2010, were approved by consensus.

**Action Item #2:** Dixie Baker will head up an initial technical examination of the NHIN Direct. Within the next few days, artifacts will get packed up for review, Judy Sparrow will collect the names of those willing to participate, and a technology review will be carried out and submitted to the newly formed tiger team before June 11.