



February 2, 2016

Karen B. DeSalvo, M.D., M.P.H., M.Sc.
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
Acting Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Re: Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) Interoperability Shared Commitment Pledge

Dear Dr. DeSalvo:

Ascension shares the ONC's principle that to achieve an open, connected care for our communities, we all have the responsibility to take action. To further these goals, we support the following principles to advance interoperability among health information systems enabling free movement of data, which are foundational to the success of delivery system reform.

1. **Consumer access**: To help consumers easily and securely access their electronic health information, direct it to any desired location, learn how their information can be shared and used, and be assured that this information will be effectively and safely used to benefit their health and that of their community.
2. **No Blocking/Transparency**: To help providers share individuals' health information for care with other providers and their patients whenever permitted by law, and not block electronic health information (defined as knowingly and unreasonably interfering with information sharing).
3. **Standards**: Implement federally recognized, national interoperability standards, policies, guidance, and practices for electronic health information, and adopt best practices including those related to privacy and security.

To achieve these goals we are and will continue to apply enabling technology to support these principles and our Mission, Vision and Values, which guide our actions at Ascension. They are foundational to our work to transform healthcare and express our priorities when providing care and services, particularly to those most in need.

- We will deliver service that is committed to the health and well-being for our communities while meeting the needs of individuals throughout their lives. Our

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Mission is to provide high-quality, low cost, personalized care for all with special attention to those who are struggling the most.

- We will work to address and eliminate healthcare disparities and achieve health equity for all we serve.
- We value creativity and courageous innovation and will continue to develop technology that provides value and builds bridges to the communities we serve and gives patients and family members the ability to engage in their health. These innovations will include patient portals and applications for patient engagement in their care and to stimulate direct interactions between patients and providers.
- In support of the Quadruple Aim, technology will support collaboration and information sharing across provider and service groups. We will support the use of innovative medical devices that automatically interfaces data into our electronic health record (EHR) systems allowing for real-time coaching and interventions when required.
- Technology we utilize will promote open interoperable systems using market-driven standards such as Sustainable Medical Applications & Reusable Technologies (SMART) on Fast Health Interoperability Resources (FHIR) to enable wellness and medical applications that integrate into diverse EHR systems to provide highly reliable care.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Mark D. Barner
Senior Vice President and CIO, Ascension
CEO, Ascension Information Services