

Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

Health IT Standards Committee

Privacy and Security Workgroup

Hearing On

The National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace

March 12, 2014

Prepared remarks

Of

Kaiser Permanente

The following prepared testimony is submitted by Kaiser Permanente, to the Office of the National Coordinator, the Health IT Standards Committee and the Privacy and Security Workgroup in connection with a hearing on the National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace (NSTIC)

Kaiser Permanente appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations to the Health IT Standards Committee and Privacy and Security Workgroup regarding the National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace.

The Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program is the largest private integrated healthcare delivery system in the U.S, delivering health care to over 9 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia¹ Kaiser Permanente is committed to delivering high quality healthcare by fostering cooperation and collaboration among providers, hospitals, health plan, and our purchasers.

My name is Kevin Isbell. I am a Senior Director with Kaiser Permanente's Information Technology (IT) division with responsibility for the Health Information Exchange (HIE) program. I am also the current program manager for the Care Connectivity Consortium (CCC). Founded in 2011, the CCC, comprised of Geisinger Health System, Intermountain Healthcare, Kaiser Permanente, Mayo Clinic and OCHIN, is committed to the promotion of health information

¹ Kaiser Permanente comprises Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., the nation's largest not-for-profit health plan, and its health plan subsidiaries outside California and Hawaii; the not-for-profit Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, which operates 38 hospitals and over 550 medical offices; and the Permanente Medical Groups, independent physician group practices that contract with Kaiser Foundation Health Plan to meet the health needs of Kaiser Permanente's member's. Kaiser Permanente also includes the Permanente Dental Associates, a multispecialty dental group, in the Northwest.

exchange through support of international standards and innovation to ensure HIE technologies are more versatile and valuable for patients, caregivers and health care organizations.²

Kaiser Permanente supports the intent of the NSTIC initiative, “where individuals and organizations will be able to trust each other because they follow agreed upon standards to obtain and authenticate their digital identities.”³

The accurate matching of patient identities across the healthcare ecosystem continues to be among the greatest challenges for information exchange. Problems related to patient identity correlation and the disambiguation of persons with similar demographic traits poses a significant patient safety issue and affects the ability to locate patient records for health information exchange between disparate electronic medical record systems.

According to recent internal research conducted by the Care Connectivity Consortium, using commonly available demographic traits for identity matching including last name, first name, date of birth, gender and at least one physical address, patient matching success rates ranged between 40 and 60 percent. This means that approximately half the time when a query for clinical data was attempted for treatment purposes, the identity of the patient could not be confirmed such that potentially critical patient information could not be made available to support the best possible clinical outcomes. In addition to the obvious patient safety concern, this limited patient matching success rate is a key dis-satisfier for those needing to collect dispersed patient medical information, including providers, medical systems, and patients, and degrades the perceived overall value of health information exchange.

There are varied reasons for this poor patient matching success rate. Some key contributors include the lack of standard required demographic traits for patient discovery, no consistent use of unique patient identifiers, and varied levels of sophistication in identity infrastructures among participating exchange organizations.

Kaiser Permanente and the Care Connectivity Consortium believe incremental improvements are possible today to facilitate better matching of patient identities for health record exchange. Obtaining industry agreement about standard demographic traits for patient discovery and enhancing the integrity of data sources will improve overall success rates. However, these improvements will only increase rates to a point. Initiatives such as NSTIC, which provide for the possibility of a verified and portable patient identity, would appear to support enhanced matching outcomes on a much broader scale in the health care ecosystem. Technical and operational challenges need to be explored in relation to identity proofing, authentication and authorizations as they relate to the NSTIC effort.

Thank You.

² Advancing Interoperability: Value of eHealth Exchange to Kaiser Permanente & the Care Connectivity Consortium (CCC) HIMSS14 February 25th, 2014

³ http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/NSTICstrategy_041511.pdf