Executive Summary

The nation needs an interoperable health system that empowers individuals to use their electronic health information to the fullest extent; enables providers and communities to deliver smarter, safer, and more efficient care; and promotes innovation at all levels. While the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act stimulated significant health information technology (health IT) adoption and exchange of electronic health information with the goal of every American having access to their electronic health information, 2015’s interoperability experience remains a work in progress. The vision is a learning health system where individuals are at the center of their care; where providers have a seamless ability to securely access and use health information from different sources; where an individual’s health information is not limited to what is stored in electronic health records (EHRs), but includes information from many different sources (including technologies that individuals use) and portrays a longitudinal picture of their health, not just episodes of care; where diagnostic tests are only repeated when necessary, because the information is readily available; and where public health agencies and researchers can rapidly learn, develop, and deliver cutting edge treatments.

If we steadily and aggressively advance our progress we can make it a reality. We must focus our collective efforts around making standardized, electronic health information securely available to those who need it and in ways that maximize the ease with which it can be useful and used.

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) is committed to advancing this vision expeditiously, systematically and in a sustainable fashion. We first laid out this vision in Connecting Health and Care for the Nation: A 10-Year Vision to Achieve an Interoperable Health IT Infrastructure and followed with a draft Shared Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap and Interoperability Standards Advisory. Working collaboratively with federal partners, states, consumers, and the private sector, we developed this shared, comprehensive interoperability agenda and action plan described in...
Connecting Health and Care for the Nation: A Shared Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap

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It is meant to build upon and shore up the existing foundation of health IT, move quickly to short-term success, and also lay out a longer term set of drivers and policy and technical components that will achieve the outcomes necessary to achieve the vision. ONC will continue to work with our partners as we coordinate the Roadmap’s implementation, which is also a critical part of achieving the Federal Health IT Strategic Plan’s vision of high-quality care, lower costs, healthy population, and engaged people.

The Roadmap identifies near-term (i.e., by the end of 2017) actions and roles that health IT stakeholders should perform to make immediate progress and impacts with respect to interoperability. It also emphasizes that we should use and build on the technology and investments made to date, while continuing to seek out ways to support innovation and move beyond EHRs as the sole data source for electronic health information to a wide range of health information technologies used by individuals, providers, and researchers. The Roadmap’s three high-level goals for health IT interoperability each reflect the progress we need to make in order to achieve a learning health system by 2024. Consequently, the short-term goal is focused on sending, receiving, finding, and using priority data domains, so that we can have an immediate impact on the care and health of individuals.

The goals are:

- **2015-2017**: Send, receive, find and use priority data domains to improve health care quality and outcomes.
- **2018-2020**: Expand data sources and users in the interoperable health IT ecosystem to improve health and lower costs.
- **2021-2024**: Achieve nationwide interoperability to enable a learning health system, with the person at the center of a system that can continuously improve care, public health, and science through real-time data access.

The Roadmap focuses deeply on the first priority goal and its accompanying milestones, critical action items, and commitments. To address current challenges, the Roadmap identifies four critical pathways that health IT stakeholders should focus on now in order to create a foundation for long-term success:
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- Improve technical standards and implementation guidance for priority data domains and associated elements. In the near-term, the Roadmap focuses on using commonly available standards, while pushing for greater implementation consistency and innovation associated with new standards and technology approaches, such as the use of APIs.
- Rapidly shift and align federal, state, and commercial payment policies from fee-for-service to value-based models to stimulate the demand for interoperability.
- Clarify and align federal and state privacy and security requirements that enable interoperability.
- Coordinate among stakeholders to promote and align consistent policies and business practices that support interoperability and address those that impede interoperability.

The Roadmap is organized into three sections starting first with “Drivers,” which are the mechanisms that can propel development of a supportive payment and regulatory environment that relies on and deepens interoperability. The next section addresses “Policy and Technical Components,” which are essential items stakeholders will need to implement in similar or compatible ways in order to enable interoperability, such as shared standards and expectations around privacy and security. The last section addresses “Outcomes,” which serve as the metrics by which stakeholders will measure our collective progress on implementing the Roadmap. Each section includes specific milestones, calls to action, and commitments that will support the development of a nationwide, interoperable health IT infrastructure.

The Roadmap is intended to be a living document. As we move forward to create a learning health system, the Roadmap will be updated and new versions will be created when milestones are met and new challenges emerge. Future Roadmap versions will continue to be informed by and incorporate stakeholder feedback. ONC’s website will list calls to actions and commitments mapped out by stakeholder group so that all stakeholders can identify and do their part.