



# The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement

## *Highlights for the Patient Community*

### Upgrading Health Care for the 21st Century

Imagine if your health care information was as easy to use as your favorite app, as convenient to search as an online shopping site, and as simple to share with your doctors as sending a text.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) are working to advance health information technology in order to improve your health care experience. The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) is designed to:

- **Give you easy, convenient, and secure** access to your electronic health information, when you need it, wherever you are.
- **Establish baseline privacy and security requirements** to protect your electronic health information when you share it electronically with your doctors and all of the places that you get care.
- **Support the use of smartphone apps and other technology** to access, use, and share your electronic health information in ways that work for you.
- **Help you better manage and understand your electronic health information** and how it's being accessed, used, and shared.



A growing number of doctors have adopted electronic health records (EHRs) and started using health information technology (health IT) to better serve you when you come into their practice. When your health information is stored electronically, it can be easier for your doctor to share that information with other doctors involved in your care and it can also be easier for you to access your own data. This helps ensure that important health information is available when and where it's needed — and that you get the high quality care you deserve.

One way that doctors can share your electronic health information is through a health information network. These networks are similar to cell phone networks, but they're used for securely sharing electronic health information. ONC wants to make health information networks work better for you and your doctors.

To do this, ONC is developing policies for networks about how to share people's electronic health information with other networks. The Trusted Exchange Framework and the Common Agreement will spell out those policies. These policies are intended to help both you and your doctors securely access and share your electronic health information.

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## What does this mean for me?

The Trusted Exchange Framework and the Common Agreement are being designed with you in mind. The purpose is to make sure that you can access, share, and use your health information electronically, when and where you need it.

When more doctors are connected through trusted networks, your information will be more readily available for care — even if you’ve received health care at different locations across the country. This will help your doctors give you the best treatment possible and will allow you to more easily shop for care.

Also, visit [The Guide to Getting & Using Your Health Records](#) to learn about how to get your health record, check it, and use it.

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## How can patients comment on the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement?

We want to hear from you. To comment on the Trusted Exchange Framework Draft 2, the Minimum Required Terms and Conditions Draft 2 for the future Common Agreement, and the QHIN Technical Framework Draft 1, please visit [healthIT.gov/TEFCA](http://healthIT.gov/TEFCA).