



## The Trusted Exchange Framework and the Common Agreement

### *Highlights for Health Care Providers*

### What is the Trusted Exchange Framework and the Common Agreement?

The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) will outline a policy and technical approach to enable nationwide exchange of electronic health information across disparate health information networks (HINs). The development of the TEFCA is mandated by the [21st Century Cures Act](#).

For a variety of stakeholders — including patients, providers, developers, and HINs — the TEFCA is designed to provide a single on-ramp to nationwide connectivity that can support secure electronic health information exchange.

Once finalized, the TEFCA will give patients, health care providers, payers, HINs, health IT developers, and other stakeholders access to data when and where it's needed to better support patient care.



### How does the TEFCA work?



- The TEF describes high-level principles that networks should adhere to for trusted exchange. The Common Agreement is a legal agreement that will enable network-to-network data sharing.
- Health care providers, patients, payers, state agencies, public health professionals and other stakeholders will be able to use the policies, technical specifications, and network connectivity requirements of the Common Agreement to send and receive electronic health information seamlessly.
- Currently, stakeholders often must join multiple networks to get the information they need to support patient care. In contrast, joining a HIN that participates in the network created by the Common Agreement will enable access to and exchange of information from varied sources.
- Participants in the network will be able to exchange electronic health information for specific health care purposes, including for treatment, quality improvement, public health, and patient access.
- Health care providers will have a variety of options for participating in the Common Agreement, such as joining an existing HIN that meets the requirements of the Common Agreement.
- Providers will also need to agree to certain obligations around how they'll use the data they access.

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## Things to know

The TEFCA takes a flexible approach to ensuring that data can be efficiently exchanged while also protecting privacy and security. The TEFCA will set minimum requirements to enable the appropriate sharing of electronic health information between networks in order to:



- **Allow diverse types of health care providers to participate in nationwide exchange**, including ambulatory, long-term and post-acute care (LTPAC), behavioral health, community and social services, and others.
- **Allow health care providers to join any HIN they choose**, and have access to electronic health information on their patients regardless of which health IT developer they use or where their patients are located.
- **Decrease costs and improve efficiency** by reducing or eliminating the need to join multiple HINs and multiple legal agreements, or the need to create one-off, point-to-point interfaces.
- **Facilitate access to complete and accurate patient data** no matter where patients receive care — this will enable safer, more effective treatment.
- **Ensure that a core set of data will be available** among networks connected through the Common Agreement for the following exchange purposes: treatment, individual access services, public health, benefits determination, a subset of the HIPAA-defined payment activities (utilization review), and a subset of the HIPAA-defined health care operations (quality assessment and improvement, business planning and development).
- **Improve communication and care coordination across multiple health care settings** by allowing providers and health systems to more easily work with third parties, such as analytics products, care coordination services, HINs, Qualified Clinical Data Registries (QCDRs), and other registries.
- **Give providers confidence in the data they receive** by setting minimum privacy and security requirements for protecting patient data, including requirements on identity proofing and authentication.

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## As a provider, how can I be involved in the TEFCA?

You will be able to leverage the Common Agreement by:

- Calling on the health IT developers or HINs you contract with to be connected to the network created by the Common Agreement.
- Joining an existing qualified HIN (QHIN) or joining with other entities to form your own QHIN.



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 [www.healthit.gov/TEFCA](http://www.healthit.gov/TEFCA).