



The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement

Highlights for State Governments and Public Health

What is the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement?

The Trusted Exchange Framework and the 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 health care providers, patients, state government and public health agencies, and other stakeholders access to data when and where it's needed to better support patient care.



How does the TEFCA work?

- The Trusted Exchange Framework 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 a specific health care purpose, including for treatment, quality improvement, public health, and patient access.
- State agencies and public health stakeholders will have a variety of options for participating, such as joining an existing HIN that meets the requirements of the Common Agreement.
- State agencies and public health stakeholders will need to agree to certain obligations around how they will use and exchange the data they access.



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Things to know

The TEFCA will set principles and minimum requirements to enable the appropriate and secure sharing of electronic health information between networks. State Medicaid agencies can benefit from the future Common Agreement in multiple ways, including:



- **Improved ability for providers to coordinate care** across multiple settings.
- **Easier and more accurate measurement of health care quality** at the state level, which can help states expand value-based health care purchasing.
- **Improved state-level dashboards** of health care services utilization, which can support decision-making around high-cost health care expenditures that impact state budgets.
- **Better fraud detection** due to enhanced data availability.
- **Reduced cost to the state** for interfaces between health IT systems and HINs.

Public health agencies will be able to use the exchange purposes and modalities that the Common Agreement enables to improve public health functions such as:

- Electronic case reporting.
- Immunization reporting and cross-jurisdictional immunization exchange.
- Syndromic surveillance, electronic lab reporting, cancer registry reporting.
- Patient tracking and family reunification during emergencies.
- Identification of at-risk populations.
- Disease surveillance and outbreak investigation.

How can state governments leverage the TEFCA?

States can leverage the TEFCA by planning to:



- Contract with entities facilitating health information exchange that are connected to the network created by the Common Agreement.
- Require health data-sharing activities to use the network created by the Common Agreement (e.g., require Medicaid managed care contracts to require providers to be connected to the network).
- Include the Common Agreement in state and local regulatory requirements that address health information networks.

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.