

Investigation of Health IT-related Deaths, Serious Injuries, or Unsafe Conditions (ONC Contract #HHSP233201300019C)

The Joint Commission has been at the forefront of patient safety, as the largest accrediting body for health care organizations in the United States. ONC and The Joint Commission are committed to ensuring that electronic health records (EHRs) are a strong foundation for a culture of safety in healthcare, built on continuous learning and process improvement. But we both recognize that health IT creates its own new safety issues.

ONC's contract with The Joint Commission will ensure that we have an early detection system on health IT-related safety issues, including those associated with EHRs. The Joint Commission will enhance the use of its de-identified database under its Sentinel Events program to identify, investigate, and ultimately prevent sentinel events, including deaths, serious injuries, and potentially unsafe conditions, associated with health IT. The results of The Joint Commission's work will inform ONC's health IT patient safety program, as we engage all stakeholders in activities that achieve the objectives of ONC's *Health IT Patient Safety Action and Surveillance Plan* — to use health IT to make care safer and to continuously improve the safety of health IT.

ONC's contract with The Joint Commission has the following objectives:

- To support root cause analyses and investigations of health IT-related sentinel events, in both hospitals and ambulatory settings, as part of The Joint Commission's ongoing Sentinel Events program
- To make information publicly available on identifying and avoiding health IT-related sentinel events
- To better understand health IT-related sentinel events in the context of all causes of sentinel events
- To evaluate factors that impact effective investigations of health IT-related sentinel events and the role of external organizations in such investigations
- To provide information that will enable ONC to strengthen its health IT patient safety programs

Specifically, The Joint Commission will do the following:

- Write a report identifying high priority areas for expected types of health IT-related sentinel events and providing a means of classifying such events, based on literature, experience, and expert opinion.
- Provide (de-identified) reports on health IT-related sentinel events
- Conduct at least 10 investigations (5 hospitals, 5 ambulatory sites) of health IT-related events and provide a written (de-identified) summary of the events.
- Develop and post materials, tools, and resources to help healthcare providers identify, report, correct, and avoid health IT-related sentinel events, and conduct at least one webinar or other training, reaching a nationwide audience, using those resources.
- Produce at least one sentinel event alert or other public guidance on risk areas associated with EHRs and related health IT, ways to investigate and analyze those events, and ways to avoid or mitigate risks.
- Produce and publish a research paper (using a de-identified database) analyzing health IT-related sentinel events
- Produce a final report describing investigations, identifying resources needed to effectively conduct investigations, describing risk management interventions and corrective actions, and identifying factors that may impact the ability of an external organization to conduct health IT-related investigations.