



HEALTHCARE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS PANEL

a call for participants

*Within ten years, every American
must have a personal electronic
medical record. . . .*

— President George W. Bush
April 26, 2004





The *Evaluation of Standards Harmonization Process for Health Information Technology Program* (ONCHIT1) is a unique and unprecedented opportunity to bring together the intellectual assets of organizations with a stake in health data standards. With the oversight and backing of the National Health Information Technology Coordinator, ONCHIT1 guides the collaboration of these organizations toward a health-care information technology (HIT) standards harmonization process.

The *Standards Harmonization Collaborative*, a cooperative effort of eighteen (18) independent entities, has proposed the establishment of a Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP). The Panel will assist in achieving widely accepted and readily-implemented consensus-based standards that will enable and support widespread interoperability among healthcare information technology, especially as they would interact in a Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) for the United States.

The HITSP will reach across the entire stakeholder community and facilitate the broadest possible participation of all affected parties. It will function as a partnership of the public and private sectors.

With the endorsement of the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), the Panel will be established¹ under the sponsorship of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and operate with a neutral and inclusive governance model. More than 20 healthcare organizations have already expressed an initial commitment to participate.

For more information, or to join the Panel, please visit www.ansi.org/hitsp.

. . . this [RFP] is a call to say time is up, and it's time for real results. I don't see a unified standards framework in the United States for healthcare. I don't even see agreement. . . . I hope entities like yours or others will come forward and take advantage of the opportunity and to use this chance to be a guider of collaboration.

— David Brailer, MD, PhD at the
HIMSS Summit on June 7, 2005

¹Formation of the HITSP is contingent upon award of the ONCHIT1 contract by the Department of Health and Human Services. The award is expected to be announced in September — within 30 days of approval a minimum of three use-cases must be recommended. In order to be adequately prepared for an immediate launch of the HITSP so that the 30-day deadline can be met, outreach to representative stakeholders has already begun. Should the contract be awarded to another party, support for the Standards Harmonization Initiative will continue but the HITSP may not be formed.

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SCOPE OF THE HITSP

The HITSP will be a multi-stakeholder coordinating body designed to provide the process within which stakeholders identify, select, and harmonize standards for communicating healthcare information throughout the healthcare spectrum. It will be use-case driven, with decision making based on industry needs. Utilizing information from stakeholders, the HITSP will facilitate the development of harmonized implementation profiles and information policies, including SDO work products (e.g. standards, technical reports). These policies, profiles and work products are essential for establishing privacy, security and interoperability among healthcare software applications.

In conducting its work, the HITSP will coordinate, as appropriate, with other national, regional and international groups addressing healthcare informatics to ensure that the resulting standards are globally relevant.

We have the most advanced medical system in the world, yet patient safety is compromised every day due to medical errors, duplication and other inefficiencies. Harnessing the potential of information technology will help reduce errors and improve quality by making it more effective and efficient.

— Majority Leader Bill Frist and
Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton
in a joint statement issued on
June 30, 2005

BEGINNING STEPS

- A national search is now underway to identify an individual with outstanding credentials of accomplishment in the healthcare field and the stature to chair the HITSP and guide its diverse stakeholders to success.
- An interim Use-Case Committee will launch in mid-August to begin work to establish criteria and relative merits of possible use-cases. [To volunteer, please contact Joyce Sensmeier, HIMSS vice-president of informatics (jsensmeier@himss.org).] The interim Committee's work will be assessed and turned over to a permanent Committee upon launch of the HITSP.
- A first meeting of the Panel is being planned for September 27-28, 2005, in Washington, DC, when the HITSP charter, membership of the Board of Directors, operational procedures, and the recommended use-cases will be reviewed and ratified.
- A minimum of three use-cases must be recommended by the HITSP Board of Directors to the HHS Secretary within 30 days after the ONCHIT1 contract is signed.



PRINCIPLES

The HITSP shall serve the public good by working to ensure that the combined work of various healthcare information standards organizations support interoperability, accurate use, access, privacy and security of shared health information. The Panel is being organized so that it shall not be disproportionately dependent upon any single organization or stakeholder group. It will operate under the following principles:

- **TRANSPARENCY** *Essential information regarding governance, activities and decisions of the Panel is accessible to all parties on a timely basis.*
- **PERFORMANCE-BASED** *Standards specify essential characteristics rather than detailed designs where possible.*
- **OPENNESS** *Participation on the Panel is open to all affected interests.*
- **COHERENCE** *The process encourages coherence to avoid overlapping and conflicting standards.*
- **STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION** *The governance and all activities of the Panel shall include broad representation from stakeholders without regard to ANSI membership or accreditation.*
- **CONSISTENCY** *Where business conditions dictate that different standards transmit the same information, the process assures consistency in the representation of this information in the different standards.*
- **IMPARTIALITY AND BALANCE** *No one interest dominates the process or is favored over another among competing interests and various stakeholders.*
- **DUE PROCESS** *Decisions include due process so that all views are considered and a dispute resolution process exists.*
- **EFFECTIVENESS AND RELEVANCE** *Decisions are relevant and effectively respond to regulatory and market needs, as well as scientific and technological developments.*
- **TIMELINESS** *Decisions are reached in a timeframe that meets market expectations.*
- **CONSENSUS** *Decisions are reached through a use-case driven process that encourages consensus among those affected.*
- **FLEXIBILITY** *Decision making may incorporate variation in process to meet the needs of differing sectors, so long as the other principles are not compromised.*



COMMUNITIES REPRESENTED Membership in the HITSP is open to all affected parties. Stakeholder groups within any of the following categories are encouraged to participate:

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (SDOs)

- SDOs accredited by ANSI in health informatics and implementation of EHR systems
- SDOs or other organizations responsible for the standards chosen by the Consolidated Health Informatics (CHI) initiative
- SDOs or other organizations put forth by the respondents to the November 2004 HHS RFI on the development and adoption of an NHIN
- SDOs under the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-Standards Association (IEEE-SA) with a focus on healthcare and health informatics
- SDOs that serve as U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Administrators under the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) with a focus on healthcare and health informatics
- Other SDOs nominated by expert cross-agency sources in the Federal government

NON-SDO STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS

- Recognized national associations or other similar types of organizations that have broad national membership constituencies of clinicians and providers and their representative organizations
- Safety net providers and their representative organizations

- Vendors that develop, market, install, and support health IT products and their representative organizations
- Healthcare purchasers or employers and their representative organizations
- Healthcare payers or health insurance companies and their representative organizations
- Public health agencies and their representative organizations
- National organizations with a broad representation of stakeholders with an interest in healthcare information technology standards
- Clinical and health-services researchers' representative organizations

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES²

- Federal, state, and local agencies
- Coordinating bodies with responsibilities for and/or a relationship to healthcare information technology used in the public sector

CONSUMERS

- Consumer organizations with an interest in health information technology standards

For more information, or to join, please visit www.ansi.org/hitsp

²Because the RFP responses are currently under review by the Department of Health and Human Services, the organizers believe that direct contact with governmental bodies would be inappropriate. This initial outreach is to SDOs and non-SDO stakeholders (including consumers) only. If and when the contract is received, the organizers will immediately seek involvement from governmental bodies.



Throughout its history, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has maintained as its primary goal the enhancement of global competitiveness of U.S. business and the American quality of life by facilitating voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems and promoting their integrity. The Institute provides a forum for hundreds of ANSI-accredited standards developers that work cooperatively to develop American National Standards (ANS). ANSI is the official U.S. representative to the International Accreditation Forum, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), via the U.S. National Committee. Comprised of businesses, professional societies and trade associations, standards developers, government agencies, and consumer and labor organizations, the ANSI Federation represents the diverse interests of more than 120,000 entities and 3.2 million professionals worldwide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Interim Use-Case Committee

To volunteer for the Interim Use-Case Committee, please contact Joyce Sensmeier, HIMSS Vice President of Informatics (jsensmeier@himss.org)

