

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Electronic Health Record



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Newsletter

TMA Staff Encouraged to Participate in New WEDI Workgroup

Electronic Standards News

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While not a HIPAA Electronic Standard, the Electronic Health Record (EHR) will have widespread impacts on all areas of Health IT; therefore, it is important for TMA to take an active role in the planning and implementation of the EHR. The **Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange, (WEDI)** is in the process of standing up a new workgroup that will address issues related to the EHR implementation and serve as a forum for sharing information across the industry. Successfully implementing an EHR system will require extensive planning, analysis, and collaboration with these types of industry workgroups. WEDI's new EHR workgroup plans to kick off in mid-November and will identify activities, risks, solutions and education associated with the implementation and use of EHRs that are consistent and supportive with the incentive programs included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

ARRA requires "meaningful use" of an EHR in order to qualify for the incentives. Achieving "meaningful use" of EHRs will be extremely challenging for providers and vendors, impacting both technology and operational business processes. Overall industry coordination and guidance will be essential to successful implementation. WEDI's new workgroup will be a key resource for all sectors of the healthcare industry to share ideas, provide education and disseminate implementation information. Members of the workgroup will develop work products and programs to assist the industry to better understand the ARRA incentive programs and to identify and implement the most appropriate EHR for their organization.

Three new Notices of Proposed Rule Making (NPRMs) regarding the EHR are expected in mid-December of this year. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will issue an NPRM regarding meaningful use, with a 60 day public comment period and possible Final Rule as early as Spring 2010. The Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) will issue an Interim Final Rule (IFR) regarding certification criteria and standards for EHR incentive programs. Like the NPRM for meaningful use, this IFR is expected to have a 30-60 day comment period and a Final Rule expected in the Spring. However, unlike an NPRM, a Final Rule resulting from an IFR is considered law the day it is issued. Lastly, an NPRM regarding the certification process is expected to be published by the ONC, with a 30-60 day comment period followed by a Final Rule. Meaningful use, certification criteria and the certification process could all be fully defined and mandated by Spring 2010. It is imperative that TMA plan accordingly and participate as much as possible in such groups as WEDI in order to remain ahead of the curve and knowledgeable of industry activities.

The Electronic Health Record (EHR) is a longitudinal electronic record of patient health information generated by one or more encounters in any care delivery setting. Included in this information are patient demographics, progress notes, problems, medications, vital signs, past medical history, immunizations, laboratory data, and radiology reports. The EHR automates and streamlines the clinician's workflow. The EHR has the ability to generate a complete record of a clinical patient encounter, as well as supporting other care-related activities directly or indirectly via interface—including evidence-based decision support, quality management, and outcomes reporting.

TMA maintains a corporate membership with WEDI which allows participation in this and other WEDI Strategic National Implementation Process (SNIP) workgroups. For more information on participating in WEDI workgroups via TMA's membership, interested parties can visit the WEDI website: www.wedi.org ; or contact the HIPAA team through Lisa Pralle at lisa.pralle.ctr@tma.osd.mil

References:

Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) http://www.himss.org/ASP/topics_ehr.asp

National Institutes of Health, National Center for Research Resources. "Electronic Health Records Overview". (April 2006). <http://www.ncrr.nih.gov/publications/informatics/ehr.pdf>

Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI), Strategic National Implementation Process (SNIP) E-mail Listserv. <http://www.wedi.org/listserv/index.shtml>

