



Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel

**HITSP News**  
Vol. 1, No. 3

September 14, 2009



The [Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel \(HITSP\)](#) is a cooperative partnership between the public and private sectors. The Panel was formed for the purpose of harmonizing and integrating standards that will meet clinical and business needs for sharing information among organizations and systems.

**Welcome to *HITSP News*, a monthly newsletter that provides news on the activities of the Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel. Visit the HITSP Web site at [www.hitsp.org](http://www.hitsp.org) for more information. If you have news or ideas for *HITSP News*, please send them to [hitsp@ansi.org](mailto:hitsp@ansi.org) for consideration.**

### **What Does HITSP Mean to You** *An Interview with Joan Duke*

*HITSP News* brings readers another column on – “What Does HITSP Mean to You?” – interviews with HITSP members and potential members about their perspective on the work of HITSP. In this article, HITSP volunteer [Joan R. Duke](#) shares her thoughts on HITSP by answering four questions that will be posed to each person interviewed for this column. She is co-chair of the HITSP Education, Communication, and Outreach (ECO) Committee working group that drives webinar development as reported in the last issue of the newsletter.

The questions below provide insight from healthcare industry professionals, some who are members of HITSP and quite familiar with its work and others who are new to this standards panel, on the value of HITSP and its role in the transformation of healthcare now underway.

Joan Duke is Founder and Principal of [Health Care Information Consultants, LLC](#). HCIC focuses on optimizing information resources, people, systems and technology. She has assisted a variety of organizations including health systems, hospitals, home care, long-term care, hospice, behavioral health, clinics, physician groups, healthcare technology vendors, and non-profits unify their organizational and information technology resources.

#### **1. What Does HITSP Mean to You?**

HITSP means interoperability to me. Interoperability means that health data will be available from multiple, diverse organizations for the caregiver when and where needed. The data will be in a form that enables the caregiver to interpret and use relevant data from patient visits, hospitalizations, testing centers, and other sites to reduce medical errors, reduce unnecessary testing, and support effective decision-making for the patient and providers during an episode of care. It also means that portions of the data will be available for secondary uses, such as for payers for patient billing, public health officials for detection of disease, and clinical researchers for analysis of effective medical practices.

What HITSP as an organization means to me is there are committed volunteers from many organizations providing the hard work and expertise necessary to define rules and prepare specifications which enable information to be effectively exchanged among the various care settings.

## **2. Do you know the purpose of HITSP?**

HITSP's purpose is to identify and harmonize standards that are acceptable and useful to support interoperability among healthcare organizations and systems. HITSP has implemented a well-defined process to develop a consensus among experts in the field to identify standards for healthcare processes and the effective transmission of data. HITSP works to establish the necessary rules that ensure standards fit their intended purposes, and to provide the material that is useful for organizations and developers who want to implement healthcare data exchange.

## **3. What do you believe the impact of HITSP is or will be on businesses and other practices?**

Before standards development organizations (SDOs), data exchange was done in a proprietary fashion to accomplish whatever data sharing was needed. There was no standard that could be shared by organizations wanting to accomplish the same objective. SDOs produced standards that were useful for various situations, but there were many options and no clear rules about which would be used, when.

HITSP's impact has been to identify the right standard for a healthcare process where data needs to be exchanged among systems and organizations. These standards sets the rules from a business and healthcare delivery perspective of why and when communication is needed, what data should be communicated, and how data can be interpreted to permit its meaning to be understood and actionable in healthcare businesses or practices. I believe that the HITSP specifications will enable the information needed for coordination of patient care, efficient delivery of care, and the use of aggregated data to improve care practices.

## **4. Is there a need for HITSP in the future?**

HITSP will be needed as there will always be a need to have rules and guidelines for data sharing among organizations. HITSP will be required to develop new specifications and to review and revise existing ones.

---

## **Public Health Perspective of HITSP ARRA Tiger Team Activities**

In April 2009, HITSP formed Tiger Teams – temporary, cross technical committee project teams responsible for developing simplified methods (known as Capabilities and Service Collaborations) to use and implement HITSP Specifications – in response to ARRA requirements. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) participated in several of the HITSP American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Tiger Team activities related to public health. CDC plays a crucial role in the development, adoption and implementation of healthcare messaging and vocabulary standards for public health information exchange applications.

CDC Vocabulary & Messaging specialists participated primarily in the HITSP Data Architecture Tiger Team (DATT), especially in the maintenance (cleanup) of HITSP data elements, value sets and Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) templates.

Based on the CDC's experience of developing and implementing recommended vocabulary standards under the Federal Consolidated Health Informatics (CHI) program, the CDC vocabulary

team clarified with DATT the metadata and implementation of value sets defined in the HITSP/C80 Clinical Document and Message Terminology construct. DATT achieved several important milestones:

- Published an updated version of HITSP/C80, which provides more detailed information needed for implementing the HITSP/C80 value sets.
- Developed the requirements for metadata registries for distributing the HITSP data elements, value sets and CDA templates.
- Provided an opportunity to collaborate between CDC vocabulary server Public Health Information Network Vocabulary Access and Distribution System (PHIN VADS) and AHRQ metadata registry USHIK regarding the distribution of HITSP/C80 value sets.
- Held several joint meetings with HITSP Quality Measures Tiger Team regarding the development of new value sets related to quality measures.
- Created a mapping of the HITSP data elements to data exchange structures, such as HL7 2.x, HL7 V3 and Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) and also identified the inconsistencies.
- Developed a technical note, which provides guidance for implementers regarding the usage of HITSP data elements, value sets and CDA templates. These activities also lead to the development of a data element dictionary.

CDC also participated in the HITSP EHR Centric Tiger Team during the process of reorganizing the various HITSP artifacts by Capabilities especially for the HITSP Interoperability Specifications related to public health, such as Biosurveillance (IS 02), Public Health Case Reporting (IS 11), Electronic Health records Laboratory Results Report (IS 01), and Immunizations and Response Management (IS 10).

**Authors:** Article submitted to *HITSP News* by Nikolay Lipskiy MD, DrPH, MBA, CDC Standards and Interoperability Lead, and Sundak Ganesan, MD, Lead CDC Vocabulary Specialist, CDC Vocabulary & Messaging Team, Northrop Grumman Consultant to CDC / NCPHI

---

## Standards Harmonization Is an Organizational Effort

Last month, the SDO Charter Organization, or SCO, met to discuss various initiatives of its members, including its coordination with and recognition of HITSP's standards harmonization efforts. The SCO's mission "is to provide an environment that facilitates effective coordination and collaboration on U.S. national healthcare informatics standards development, with recognition of the international and multi-industry stakeholder implications and challenges."

What is the relationship between HITSP and the SCO? As noted in the FAQs on the SCO Web site, "HITSP is a member of the SCO. In addition to working on use cases from the Office of the National Coordinator, HITSP's Foundations Committee is comprised of SDOs and interested parties, working on collaborative items. HITSP does not create standards; the standards development organizations create standards. When HITSP recognizes a need or a gap, it is brought to the SDOs. It was recognized by SDO participants on the Foundations Committee that there needed to be executive-level support by the SDOs. While the Foundations Committee contains industry expertise, there are working items which must be brought into the SDO's

processes for delivery. There may be tough decisions that may need to be made in collaboration, which would require executive-level support.”

Following are highlights from the August 28, 2009, meeting:

**ONC and Meaningful Use:** Discussion revolved around ONC and its recommendations due by the end of the year related to standards expectations and data vocabulary to fulfill the definition of meaningful use. It was determined that the SCO needed to reach out to the [National Library of Medicine](#) (NLM) to understand expected challenges for standards development organizations based on ONC’s recommendations. The SCO will contact the NLM and ONC to request their participation in the November meeting.

**HITSP:** HITSP requested renewed support from the SCO and its members for the medication harmonization effort. Also, there have been some harmonization efforts sent by the HITSP Foundations Committee to the standard development organizations. The Committee is awaiting feedback. It was requested that perhaps the SDOs are not sure what are open items, so a list of action items will be created by Foundations and sent to the SCO. The SDOs are then to respond with timeframes for the items.

The group asked: “How do we tactically prepare for standards modifications implementation over the next years?” In this discussion, ONC input indicated that HITSP will be included in this process. Discussion also covered the focus of activities related to ARRA and standards needs. The SCO needs to figure out how to establish better coordination of standards with the structured document architecture and messages (strategic). HITSP teams are already working on what vocabularies and standards are available for use (tactical).

**CDISC:** CDISC presented its SHARE (Shared Health and Clinical Research Electronic Library) project, which is exploring the feasibility of a global, accessible shared semantic repository (semantic wiki) designed to enable precise and standardized data element definitions that can be used in applications and studies to improve biomedical research and its link with healthcare. A pilot is underway through the end of the year. CDISC will report progress in September to its Board and will host an open webinar on October 6 (see [www.cdisc.org](http://www.cdisc.org)) for those interested. An update on the outcome of the CDISC Board meeting will be reported at the SCO meeting in November. Support was expressed from the SCO members.

The next SCO meeting will be held in Baltimore on November 13.

**Source:** HITSP volunteer Lee Ann Stember, who is President of the [National Council for Prescription Drug Programs](#), provided this update for *HITSP News*. The summary above includes some, but not all, of the business discussed at the meeting.

---

## Participate in HITSP Consumer Preferences Tiger Team

[HITSP](#) has started to address the standards harmonization process for Consumer Preferences and is seeking subject matter experts to assist with this task.

To participate, your organization must be a HITSP member. Needed areas of expertise include:

- Standards for classifying and categorizing a wide range of consumer preferences related to privacy, security, care delivery and associated service needs

- Privacy and security standards for categorizing and coding consumer privacy preferences
- Privacy and security standards for controlling access to health information
- Standards for identifying/selecting specific consumer preferences including advance directives, DNR, proxies, surrogates, family member access, and others
- Standards for consumer preferences related to care or associated service needs, including communication needs (appointment reminders, lab results, etc.), conform measures and others

HITSP has established the Consumer Preferences Tiger Team, which will operate under the joint guidance and direction of the HITSP Security, Privacy and Infrastructure Domain Technical Committee and the HITSP Consumer Perspective Technical Committee. The team will meet periodically via conference calls and face-to-face meetings to perform all HITSP tasks related to the harmonization and interoperability standards review and selection to address the needs identified in the ONC Consumer Preference Requirements Document.

If you would like to volunteer to participate in this groundbreaking activity, contact [Allyn Clemons](#), HIMSS/HITSP standards harmonization coordinator. For more information, contact [Johnathan Coleman](#), facilitator.

---

## HITSP Webinars

### **October 8 – HITSP EHR Centric Interoperability Specification 2-3:30 p.m. Eastern**

Look for more webinar information on the registration page on the [HITSP Web site](#). Participation in any of the HITSP webinars is complimentary, but advance registration is required.

Check the [HITSP website](#) to register for this October webinar.

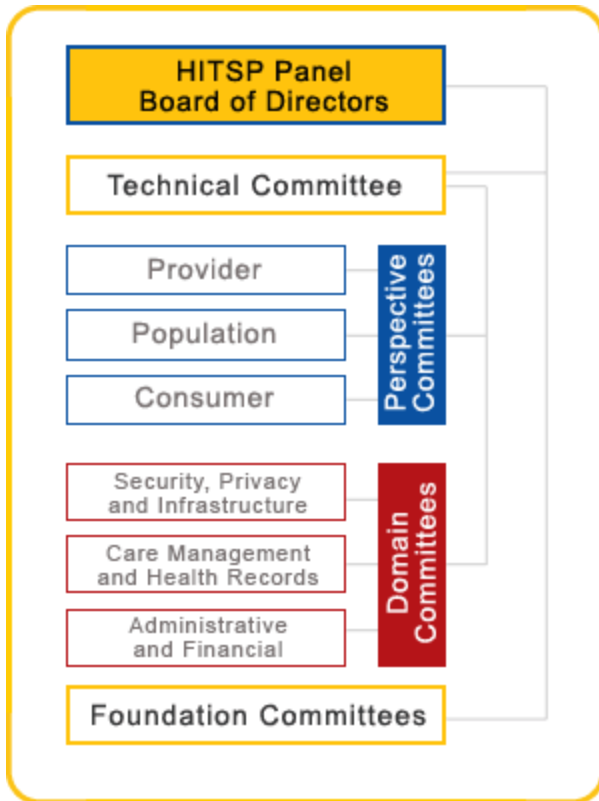
[View the webinar schedule](#)

[Listen to previous HITSP webinars](#)

---

## HITSP FAQ

### **Q. How is HITSP Structured?**



A. HITSP is structured through the use of Technical Committees to accomplish the work of producing Interoperability Specifications to address the information exchange requirements presented to it by ONC. These committees include:

**Perspective Technical Committees** which are focused on interoperability requirements defined by the primary stakeholder group (i.e., provider, population and consumer). These committees develop the framework for the Interoperability Specifications.

**Domain Technical Committees** which are focused on specific areas of healthcare IT interoperability. These committees develop specific standardized pieces (constructs) which are required by the Perspective Technical Committees; and

**Coordinating Committees** which are focused on industry liaison, internal policy and governance activities.

- [Business Plan Committee](#) (on hiatus)
- [Education, Communications and Outreach](#)
- [Foundations Committee](#)
- [Governance Committee](#) (on hiatus)
- [Harmonization Readiness Committee](#) (on hiatus)
- [HITSP-CCHIT Joint Work Group](#)
- [International Landscape Committee](#) (on hiatus)
- [Process Review Committee](#) (on hiatus)

On Tuesday, the HITSP Board discussed ARRA, Meaningful Use, Gaps in Standards for 2011/2013/2015 and the best way that HITSP could help the national effort between now and January - the period of our contract extension.

Lee Jones, HITSP Program Manager, described the effort of the next few months as phases of work, beginning with ONC's highest priorities which are already in process. You'll find the details of our Board discussion on my blog:

<http://geekdoctor.blogspot.com/2009/09/hitsps-next-priorities.html>

On the day of the HITSP Panel meeting, the HIT Standards Committee will release it finished versions of clinical operations, clinical quality and security standards along with HITSP implementation guidance. There will also be a public comment on the work to date. This body of work will form the basis of recommendations to ONC to support the interim final rule which will guide the disbursement of stimulus funds.

I look forward to the months ahead as we help ONC and all stakeholders close important gaps in standards such as lab ordering, quality summary data reporting, and clinical research data gathering.

If you have questions or concerns, please email me at [jhalamka@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:jhalamka@hms.harvard.edu)

[Read John Halamka's blog](#)

Life as a Healthcare CIO

---

## **Calendar – Dates to Remember**

### **Health IT Standards Committee**

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Omni Shoreham Hotel

Washington, D.C.

### **Health IT Policy Committee**

Friday, September 18, 2009

Omni Shoreham Hotel

Washington, D.C.

## **HITSP Calendar**

The HITSP Panel meetings will be held at:

### **Sheraton National**

900 S. Orme Street

Arlington, VA 22204

Phone: 888.627.8210

Tuesday, September 15, 2009 – in person

10 a.m.–5 p.m. Eastern

Tuesday, December 15, 2009 – teleconference

10 a.m.–5 p.m. Eastern

Wednesday, January 20, 2009 – in person  
10 a.m.–5 p.m. Eastern

### **[Technical Committee/Tiger Team Teleconference Schedule](#)**

To better keep the schedule of Technical Committee/Tiger Team conference calls up-to-date and in a consistent format, all meetings and calls, as well as dial-in and WEBEX information, are posted in a public place on the [HITSP Web site](#).

---

HITSP depends on the participation of volunteer experts from across the healthcare enterprise.  
For more information on becoming a volunteer for HITSP, please contact [hitsp@ansi.org](mailto:hitsp@ansi.org).



[www.hitsp.org](http://www.hitsp.org)

| [HITSP FAQ](#)

| [HITSP Webinars](#)

| [hitsp@ansi.org](mailto:hitsp@ansi.org)