



**HITSP News**  
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The [Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel \(HITSP\)](http://www.hitsp.org) 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.

### **HITSP from the Nursing Perspective** ***An Interview with Gregory L. Alexander***

Gregory L. Alexander, PhD, MHA, RN is Co-chair of the *HITSP Care Management and Health Records Domain Technical Committee*

Theresa Wisdom, MBA, RHIA, Senior Manager, HITSP Standards Harmonization, HIMSS, conducted this interview with Dr. Alexander on the need for and role of nurses in HITSP.

#### **Q. What is your role in the standards process and how did you become involved?**

**A.** I am the HITSP Co-chair of the Care Management and Health Records Domain Technical Committee. I became involved as the representative from the Alliance for Nursing Informatics (ANI) to HITSP. Initially, I was serving as a member of the standards panel, but quickly realized that there were few nurses taking on leadership roles in HITSP technical committee leadership. So, when a co-chair position became available in a technical committee, I thought I could serve this capacity. I was nominated and elected to the position. Now, I serve as a co-chair, assisting other leaders in the technical committee to set agendas, review standards documents and make recommendations for harmonized standards, which are provided for public comment

#### **Q. As a HITSP Technical Committee Co-chair what is your vision for HITSP standards in EHR implementations?**

**A.** When I participate in HITSP initiatives, I try to have an eye for how nursing content and processes are represented in the standards being recommended for electronic health record (EHR) systems. I have worked in many different clinical settings in my career where EHRs have been an important component for capturing patient information, assessments, lab and radiology results, etc. In many cases, the information was not transferrable or retrievable across different continuums of care. This often created situations where important information about patient conditions, treatment plans, or prior care received was not known or lost, which resulted in duplication of services and potentially unsafe situations. My vision for HITSP is that by harmonizing across recognized industry standards we can develop a system to

improve the transferability and clinician's ability to retrieve information across settings. It is my hope that interdisciplinary communication is greatly improved by creating systems that work together in tandem for the whole patient care team rather than in silos.

**Q. Within your professional role as an educator, what do you see as the impact of the standards process on the education curriculum?**

**A.** Standards that have been developed as the framework for creating better communication and documentation about care delivery are an essential requirement for the most basic educational program in any healthcare field, including both undergraduate and graduate education. Additionally, there is a need for continuing education to be developed for more experienced bedside nurses who have already completed their education.

Some educational programs have utilized the HITSP harmonization process and public commenting periods to train students about standards development; subsequently, the feedback from students who are usually subject matter experts in a specific area, such as neonatal intensive care, provide much needed input to standards developers about usefulness of standards content, definitions of terms used in this area, and missing content which standards developers have failed to recognize. Subject matter experts (SMEs) must be trained to understand how these systems function; SMEs should be involved in evaluating system usability; and SMEs should participate in ongoing evaluations for how EHRs represent care provided by healthcare workers.

**Q. What is the impact of the standards process on day-to-day practice for nursing professionals?**

**A.** The impact of implementing standard processes in nursing practice has both positive and negative effects. On a positive note, I have witnessed implementations where standardized documentation systems have enabled providers to have better oversight of documentation, including completeness of documentation. Standardized documentation appears to work best when terms are defined consistently and understood by all providers, so that they know how to interpret care provision.

I have also witnessed implementations where healthcare providers are frustrated by the inability to document true "gut feelings." Granularity of content can be limited in some EHR systems, which do not necessarily reflect the personal nature of care being provided by nurses, such as what nurses touch, smell, hear, and observe during patient care. Both of these examples underscore the necessity for including standards processes in health education curriculums, especially nursing.

Furthermore, inclusion of subject matter experts in the standards process is essential to help shape recommended standards so that when EHR systems are implemented they match the real world in which subjects perform work.

**Q. What advice or recommendations do you have for clinicians adopting HITSP interoperability specifications?**

**Implementation Guidance**

To learn more about the real-world implementation of HITSP interoperability specifications, take a look at the HITSP webinar series at [hhs.gov](#).

In addition, a [webinar](#) by HITSP chairman Dr. John Halamka offers some guidance as discussed by the HIT Standards Committee Implementation Workgroup:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Don't let "perfect" be the enemy of "good enough."
3. Keep the implementation cost as low as possible.
4. Design for the little guy.
5. Do not try to create a one-size-fits-all standard.
6. Separate content and transmission standards.
7. Create publicly available vocabularies & code sets.
8. Leverage the web for transport ("health internet").
9. Position quality measures so they motivate standards adoption.
10. Support implementers.

**A.** I've learned more from listening and reading about experiences from other smart groups of people who are undertaking implementations. Many of these stories are posted on on-going blogs or broadcasts over the Web during educational offerings. I would encourage clinicians adopting HITSP interoperability specifications to closely monitor these conversations and include the advice of other experts' experiences in their daily decisions about adoption.

**Q. Are you aware of any HITSP implementations in your geographic area or elsewhere?**

**A.** The North American Connect-a-thon January 11-15, 2010, in Chicago will provide a detailed implementation and testing process to promote the adoption of standards-based interoperability by vendors and users of healthcare information systems. The process includes a weeklong interoperability testing event.

**Q. Please identify HITSP areas of impact for the nursing profession (i.e. what domains, actions should they be aware of?)**

**A.** Nurses need to be aware of public commenting periods through HITSP and other organizations involved with standards development, such as the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology or HITSP's recent call for comments on many documents impacting nursing, including Labor and Delivery Reports, Newborn Screenings and Antepartum Records.

Additionally, CCHIT just closed (on Decemeber 11) its first public comment period for the 2011 development cycle. Comments were accepted on the first draft of criteria for Behavioral Health EHRs – both standalone and as an optional add-on to Comprehensive Ambulatory EHR certification – as well as add-on certifications for Clinical Research and Dermatology.

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### **Now Available - HITSP Education Poster**

Presented at AMIA 2009, the HITSP Education Poster is now available on the HITSP website. Special thanks to Virginia Lorenzi of New York Presbyterian Hospital, co-chair of the Communications and Outreach Workgroup of the HITSP ECO Committee, for leading this effort.

View the poster [here](#).

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### **Stay Tuned – HITSP Matrices on Products and Meaningful Use Standards**

HITSP will be releasing later this month a series of matrices correlating and cross-referencing all of its main products (Constructs, Service Collaborations, Capabilities, and Interoperability Specifications) between, as well as against, the current recommended standards for Meaningful Use.

The HITSP Matrices will be made available via the HITSP website.

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### **Public Comment Open until December 18**

#### *Technical Note on Device Connectivity (TN905) Document*

The public comment period for Technical Note on Device Connectivity (TN905) document continues until **close of business on Friday, December 18, 2009**. HITSP members and public stakeholders are

encouraged to review this document and provide comments through the HITSP comment tracking system, which is located at [www.hitsp.org](http://www.hitsp.org).

Questions about the documents or the process for review should be addressed to the HITSP Secretariat at [mmaasdeane@ansi.org](mailto:mmaasdeane@ansi.org).

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## Improved Support on HITSP Comment Tracking System

For anyone commenting on TN905 or other documents, improved support is available on HITSP's comment tracking system (CTS). Go to [http://hitsp.org/public\\_review.aspx](http://hitsp.org/public_review.aspx), the comment tracking system home page, to access the new online tool. ANSI is offering this new support in response to the technical difficulties users have been experiencing with the CTS during the multiple document review periods.

By clicking on the "request technical support" item in the box to the right, users who are experiencing technical issues accessing the CTS can send a request for assistance directly to a technical support staffer. The new link opens a form with fields for contact information and details of the problem the user is experiencing. Once submitted, this request will go directly to a technical staffer who can address the problem immediately. ANSI support staff is standing by at all hours to assist users with the system and resolve issues reported in this way.

ANSI has determined that the CTS is operating properly; however, there may still be instances where users experience difficulty entering comments or viewing comments they've already made. These issues must be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and our hope is that the new protocol for reporting these occurrences will allow us to resolve them quickly and efficiently, and reduce the number of instances that occur over time.

Contact Michelle Maas Deane at [mmaasdeane@ansi.org](mailto:mmaasdeane@ansi.org) for additional help on the CTS.

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## HITSP Webinars

The December HITSP webinar, "[Communicating Quality Measures Using New HITSP Capabilities and Service Collaborations](#)," has been cancelled. It will be rescheduled sometime in early 2010.

To access previous webinars: Visit [hitsp.org/webinars](http://hitsp.org/webinars) for the entire webinar series as well as recordings of the previous webinars. Check [www.hitsp.org/webinars](http://www.hitsp.org/webinars) for updates on the 2010 webinar schedule.

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## HITSP FAQ

### Who can join HITSP?

HITSP reaches across the stakeholder community and facilitates the broadest possible participation of all affected parties. Membership on the Panel is open to groups within any of four major categories: standards developments organizations (SDOs), non-SDO stakeholder organizations, government bodies and consumer groups. Visit the HITSP website for more information or to join.

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**Message from the Chair – Dr. John Halamka – December 11, 2009**

**From John D. Halamka, MD, HITSP Chairman:**

Folks:

A few ideas to share with you this week.

ONC announced the \$235 million dollar Beacon Communities program, which includes a significant health information exchange component. Here's my advice to these communities:

<http://geekdoctor.blogspot.com/2009/12/advice-to-beacon-communities.html>

As communities work on Health Information Exchange, many are debating the standards and architectures to use. Some want to start with simple transport solutions that use RESTful approaches. This should not be feared as it represents a quick win to begin transmitting HITSP compliant data payloads. It is also important to have a vision of supporting document-centric exchanges that will support the kind of "pull" transactions envisioned by the NHIN. Here's my advice for HIEs:

<http://geekdoctor.blogspot.com/2009/12/advice-to-health-information-exchanges.html>

There has been significant discussion of how to implement Consistent Time transactions. Here's my discussion of implementing HITSP constructs in the real world:

<http://geekdoctor.blogspot.com/2009/12/consistent-time.html>

Just to clarify, my blog is comprised of my own statements and not meant to represent the official policies of any one organization.

We continue to await the Interim Final Rule from ONC and news regarding an RFP for ongoing standards harmonization. As soon as I hear anything, you'll all be updated

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

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**HITSP Administrative Information:**

Thanks to everyone that submitted comments on the recent documents that were out for public review and comment. HITSP received over 570 comments and the Technical Committees/Tiger Teams are now hard at work dispositioning them.

**Foundations:**

- The Information Interchange Subcommittee will meet on Monday, Dec. 21st at 3 p.m. EST.
- The Foundations Harmonization Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 23rd at 10 a.m. EST.
- The Foundations Medication Terminologies Working Group is now meeting within the Foundations Harmonization Subcommittee teleconferences.
- The Foundations Security and Privacy Subcommittee teleconferences are on hiatus until further notice.

If you have questions about the administrative items, please email the HITSP Secretariat at [mmaasdeane@ansi.org](mailto:mmaasdeane@ansi.org).

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## Calendar – Dates to Remember

### Health IT Standards Committee

#### December 18, 2009

- Time: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST
- Dial-in only

#### January 20, 2010

- Time: TBD

### Health IT Policy Committee

#### December 15, 2009

- Location: Washington Marriott Hotel, 1221 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC
- Time: 9 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. EST
- Meeting Materials: [Agenda](#)

#### December 16, 2009 - NHIN Workgroup

- Location: Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert Street, NW, Washington, DC
- Time: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. EST - Public Meeting  
*Topic for discussion: Directory Services and Certificates*  
**NOTE**: The Workgroup will go into CLOSED SESSION at 1:15 p.m. EST
- How to Participate:  
Public Dial-in Number: 1-877-709-8152  
Webconference URL: <http://altarum.na3.acrobat.com/HITpolicy>
- Meeting Materials: [Agenda](#)

#### January 13, 2010

- Time: TBD

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### HITSP Calendar

**2009 HITSP Meetings**: None scheduled for remainder of the year.

**NEW DATE: January 25, 2010** – in-person Panel meeting

- Time: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST
- Location: Sheraton National, 900 S. Orme Street, Arlington, VA 22204; Phone: 888.627.8210
- Register [here](#) to attend via teleconference.

### 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 GoToMeeting information, are posted in a public place on the [HITSP website](#).

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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).



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