



HITSP

Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel

2009 webinar series . . . HITSP and U.S. healthcare IT interoperability

Steve's Story* . . . part one



When I was four years old, my doctors discovered that I had a brain tumor. My parents were really scared, and they brought me to see all of the best neurological specialists in the area. Eventually I underwent surgery to have the tumor removed. Everything went well, but for years afterwards, I had to go to the doctor pretty often for checkups and tests to monitor my development.



I'm twenty-seven years old now, and I still see a lot of doctors. Between moving to a different city when I went to college, to changing insurance providers when I got my first job, to having my doctors retire or change practices, it seems like I see new providers every year.



Every time I visit a new doctor or a different healthcare facility, I usually have to recreate my medical history because very few of the providers are connected or set up to share information. It's an annoyance to fill out piles of forms listing my allergies, medical history, and insurance information. These details aren't easy to remember, especially when I'm not feeling well.



It's also been very difficult to get records transferred from one facility to another, and sometimes important information like test results are left behind. Even my primary care physician and my neurologist, both of whom I see pretty regularly, don't always share results or have the most up-to-date information from one another.



Another problem that I face is having doctors perform the same tests and procedures that I've already had done, just because they don't have the results. If I visit a new clinic and they don't have any of the CT scans that I've had done from over the years, it's harder for the doctor to tell if something is wrong.



But above being a hassle to have to fill out forms and have tests re-taken, I'm worried that my providers aren't able to give me the best possible care. Without all of my medical history in front of them, I fear that they'll miss seeing a trend in my progress that could have a huge impact on my health.



**based on a true story*

continued next page



Steve's story is not happy, and it is not uncommon. Poor communications between and among doctors, labs, pharmacies, insurance companies and other providers cause many patients to suffer from fragmented care that is detrimental to their health.

Healthcare in an Interoperable World

In an interoperable world, Steve's health record could be seamlessly and securely transferred from one healthcare facility to another, between and among diverse systems. Providers and care setting where Steve has gone for testing or treatment previously will also have the ability to contribute valuable information on Steve's past medical history.

With Steve's consent, his care providers would be able to gain instant access to data from the providers and care settings that he currently goes to, or that he has gone to in the past. This includes information on testing and treatment, active and past medication lists, allergies, current and previous problems, diagnoses, visit summaries, lab results and other test results (including images), registration, and insurance information.

Steve could rest assured that he is receiving the best possible care because his care providers will have access to medical records that will indicate any trends in his treatment or development. In an interoperable world, Steve wouldn't have to worry about filling out forms, taking the same test multiple times, or providing his doctors with information, giving him more time and energy to focus on what's really important: his health.

HITSP: Enabling Healthcare Interoperability

The Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) is a national, volunteer-driven, consensus-based organization that is working to ensure the interoperability of electronic health records in the United States.

A cooperative partnership between the public and private sectors, HITSP identifies and selects the necessary functional components and standards to enable the interoperable exchange of health care data. HITSP also documents any gaps in standards which must be resolved. The Panel then develops guidance documents known as Interoperability Specifications (IS) that recommend the standards that will meet clinical and business needs for sharing information across organizations and systems. Once an IS is recognized by HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt, agencies administering or sponsoring federal health programs are required to implement the standards.

Operating under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), HITSP is sponsored by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) in cooperation with strategic partners the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), the Advanced Technology Institute (ATI), and Booz Allen Hamilton.

Nearly 400 organizations representing consumers, health care providers, public health agencies, government agencies, standards developing organizations, and other stakeholders now participate in the HITSP and its committees.



More Information

www.HITSP.org or hitsp@ansi.org