



HITSP

Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel

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



Steve's Story* . . . part three

"Steve" is a 27-year-old male coping with the long-term effects of a brain tumor that was removed during his childhood. He continues to face issues regarding the availability and usability of his medical information during follow-up and emergency care.



I think everyone has had at least a couple of doctors in their life. From outgrowing your pediatrician, to moving to a new state, to changing insurance plans, there are a lot of reasons to change healthcare providers. With my medical history, I've had more than just a few. I'm only twenty-seven and I've already had a general pediatrician, a pediatric neurosurgeon, a pediatric neurologist, a general practitioner, and an adult neurosurgeon.



When my illness acts up, even more doctors get involved. Every time I have a seizure, I visit my general practitioner, who refers me to a neurology consultant. Sometimes the neurology consultant will then refer me to a local hospital's neurology service for further evaluation.



Between all of these doctors' visits, a lot of information is exchanged. Every new office asks me to fill out a number of forms stating my personal information, insurance information, allergies, and family history. Once I'm in the examination room, each doctor asks me to recount my own medical history, including what treatments and medications I've tried, and what results I've had on a whole host of medical tests. The problem is that in today's system, neither the neurologist nor the hospital has easy access to my recent health records or my full medical history, including my pediatric neurology records. I do my best to remember everything, but it's an exhausting task and I don't think I'm giving the doctors all of the information that they need.



I wish there was a way that this information could be transferred electronically – and instantly – between all of my care providers. When my doctor sends me to a specialist for a consultation, he could also send over relevant medical records so that the specialist has the background information he needs. And if I switched care providers for good, my new doctor would have access to my full medical records.



When doctors are lacking details from my medical records, they're forced to make uninformed decisions about my care. With a better system for transferring information, I could be assured that my providers are well-equipped to give me the best possible treatment.

**based on a true story*

continued next page





Steve's story is stressful for him and his family, but his experience is not that uncommon for anyone with a chronic disease. Poor communication 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 records would be seamlessly and securely transferred from one healthcare facility to another, between and among diverse systems.

Providers and care settings 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 active and past medical lists; allergies; current and previous problems and diagnoses; visit summaries; labs, images, and other test results; and registration and insurance information.

Through the seamless and secure exchange of information, Steve would have access to his own personal health record, where he could update his personal and family health history and grant access to his various providers. He would also have easy access to results, conditions, allergies, and diagnosis codes — all presented in layperson terms.

In an interoperable world, Steve wouldn't have to worry about filling out so many 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 the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), agencies administering or sponsoring federal health programs are required to implement the standards.

Operating under contract to 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