



HITSP

Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel

a webinar series on U.S. healthcare interoperability



Steve's Story* . . . part seven

"Steve" is a 26-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.



For most of my life, I've been in and out of doctors' offices and hospitals. Each time I see a new care provider, I've had to fill out long, detailed forms. I am constantly repeating information about my family's and my own medical histories, detailing past surgeries and treatments, allergies, and past and current medications. My personal information can be found in filing cabinets all over the country — and I frequently have to carry medical records with me when I meet a new specialist.



With all of the trouble I've had getting my medical records and test results into the hands of various doctors, I definitely support a system where my information is available to the providers who need it. But in spite of that, I'm concerned that my medical records might end up in the wrong hands.



My medical problems have made me really self-conscious and I want to protect my privacy. Only my family and my closest friends know the full extent of my medical background. So far I've been lucky. As far as I know, no one but my doctors has seen my medical records. But every now and then, you hear a story about how someone's health information got posted on the Internet, or leaked to a future employer, or even just spread around the neighborhood as gossip.

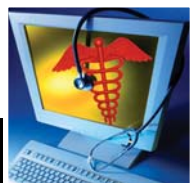


I'm not being paranoid — I know that no one from the media is going to ransack a doctor's office just so they can put my medical information in a magazine or on television like I'm a celebrity. But I am realistic — I don't want to have to worry that the acquaintance of a "friend-of-a-friend" who works in a medical office somewhere can obtain information about me or my condition.



I'd like to be assured that only the doctors, lab workers, and healthcare providers that I give permission to have access to my medical information — and even then, only to the appropriate components of my health records. My primary care physician needs to have access to everything, but the nurse who draws blood for my lab tests might not.

My health is a private matter, and it's important to me that my medical information is only shared on a need-to-know basis.



**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 personal health records will be exchanged seamlessly and securely between and among diverse systems for access. They will be accessible by providers with the appropriate authorization and inaccessible to anyone that does not have the requisite approval.

With Steve's consent, his care providers would be able to gain instant access to data from other providers and care settings where he has previously received testing or treatment. He will have the ability to specify what information should be seen, and by whom.

These permissions would provide Steve's care providers with the most up-to-date records available because his healthcare data would be retrieved electronically from its source. Instant access would be available to active and past medication lists; allergies; diagnoses, discharges, and visit summaries; and lab results and other test results, including images. The administrative staff would have access to his demographic registration and insurance information, while the healthcare professional has access to more the more detailed — and personal — information.

As a patient, Steve will be able to review and annotate his personal health record with his own findings while also monitoring and collecting clinical information from his care providers. He can rest assured that the privacy and security of his records are protected within the strict privacy and security standards set forth by HITSP.

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 healthcare 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