

APHA Policy Actions for EHRs and PHRs: A Public Hearing Session 4152.0

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Current Context

- No single conceptual construct for the EHR exists, but rather a broad range of activities all classified under the rubric of EHR development and implementation.
- Little coordination exists among the federal, state, local, and provider levels.
- APHA members have little understanding of an EHR, its scope, functions, or implications going forward.
- Broad consensus exists that privacy and confidentiality are important, but that new methods must be found to assure them as EHR's evolve and become normative.
- Little work is underway on PHRs.

Recommended APHA Policy

- APHA should immediately form a Working Group on EHRs and PHRs to develop policy for the organizational infrastructure.
- APHA should strongly advocate to the HHS Office of the Coordinator for Health Information Technology for immediate improvement in coordination of activities and distribution of information, so that a workable, interoperable system can be developed.
- APHA should support immediately convening a national summit on EHRs and PHRs.
- Meet with key Congressional and Administration officials.

The APHA Summit

- This Summit could be convened under the joint leadership of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the Public Health Data Consortium (PHDC). Participating entities could include APHA, National Association of Health Data Organizations (NAHDO), Academy Health (AH), National Governors Association (NGA), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA), Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO), National Association of County and City Health Officers (NACCHO), National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD), and National Association of State Medicaid Directors (NASMD), together with representatives of the American Health Information Community (AHIC) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT). Each of these organizations could be consulted to assure that no key group is omitted from the Summit.

Meet with Congressional and Administrative Officials

- One of the key goals of the Summit would be to get strong endorsement for immediately reaching out to key Congressional and Administration officials. The purpose of these meetings would be to urge immediate federal action to improve coordination and support for EHR development, including development of data and interoperability standards. As noted above, it is critical that federal officials be urged to engage in broad information sharing at all levels, so a workable, interoperable system can be developed.

Contact Information

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