

ONC Releases Health IT Strategic Plan For 2015-2020

✘ In early December, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) released a new Federal Health IT Strategic Plan for 2015 through 2020 to serve as a broad federal strategy and help set the context for the Nationwide Interoperability Roadmap, scheduled for release in January 2015.

The strategic plan is an update to an earlier five-year initiative developed by the ONC in 2011, which ONC Director Karen DeSalvo notes has already made significant progress in advancing health IT. According to DeSalvo, "The 2015 Strategic Plan provides the federal government a strategy to move beyond health care to improve health, use health IT beyond EHRs, and use policy and incentive levers beyond the incentive programs."

More than 35 federal agencies, including the Defense Department's Military Health System and the Veterans Affairs Department's Veterans Health Administration, participated in drafting the plan, which addresses gaps left in the previous version and aims to advance the way health information is understood and transported across different infrastructures.

The 28-page plan outlines five main goals with 14 objectives to help improve the use of IT beyond hospitals and physician practices. These include expanding the adoption of health IT, advancing secure and interoperable health information, strengthening health care delivery, advancing the health and well-being of individuals and communities and advancing research, scientific knowledge and innovation.

These goals aim to leverage interoperability to foster information exchange and improve quality of care while also

supporting patient-provider interaction. DeSalvo notes, “With this updated plan, the federal government signals that, while we will continue to work towards more widespread adoption of health IT, efforts will begin to include new sources of information and ways to disseminate knowledge quickly, securely and efficiently.”

The ONC’s strategic plan is open for public comment through Feb. 6, and it will be important to follow the recommendations and feedback from health industry stakeholders as we move towards a more digital health care system. DeSalvo argues that the success of this plan is dependent on insight from public and private stakeholders and encourages comments from industry experts to improve the strategies.

What do you think of the ONC’s latest strategic plan? Tweet @CNSICorp to let us know!

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