

Six Key ONC Interoperability Changes Coming in 2020

Earlier in 2019, the ONC released a proposed rule change to the 21st Century Cures Act which would fundamentally change the way healthcare organizations send, receive, and share information with patients and with each other. The ONC's massive document outlines a host of regulations, directives, and criterion intended to fast-track healthcare choice and competition while also removing roadblocks to interoperability. Below, InteropTex outlines what we believe are the six key interoperability changes that all healthcare organizations will have to address once the ONC releases its Final Ruling Date.



New USCDI Standard

New United States Core Data for Interoperability (USCDI) Standard: The ONC proposes to remove the Common Clinical Data Set (CCDS) definition and replace it with the USCDI Standard which holds essential data classes and constituent data elements necessary to exchange data in support of fundamental nationwide interoperability.

Use of Open FHIR API's

Use of FHIR Application Programming Interfaces (APIs): The ONC proposes a new criterion which would replace the "application access – data category request" certification criterion for APIs. This new "standardized API for patient and population services" certification criterion would require the use of Health Level 7's Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) standards and several implementation specifications.

Prohibits Contracts for Blocking

Contractual Agreements Cannot Be Used as a Block: According to the new regulations, a healthcare IT developer cannot impose or enforce any contractual requirement or legal rights that would block the secure sharing of data. If a healthcare IT developer has contracts/agreements in existence that contravene this condition, the developer must notify all affected customers or other persons or entities that the prohibition or restriction will not be enforced.

Inclusion of Pediatrics and Others

Inclusion of Pediatric Care and Opioid Abuse Provisions: The ONC has identified existing criteria as well as proposed changes that could benefit pediatric care providers and have created recommendations for the voluntary certification of healthcare IT for Pediatric care. The ONC also sought public comment on existing program requirements that might help address the Opioid Abuse epidemic, including prevention and treatment.

Prohibits Information Blocking

Prohibits Information Blocking: Healthcare IT developers will not take any action that constitutes information blocking as defined by ONC in 170.401 and by section 3022(a) of the Public Health Service Act (PHSA). This includes EHR and EMR providers who charge exorbitant fees for integrations. Fees will be regulated as well.

No Restrictions on Communication

Prohibits Restricting Communication of Information: This element requires that a healthcare IT developer does not prohibit or restrict communication regarding the usability, interoperability, security, user experience and/or business practice of any other healthcare IT. This section also addresses Fee Regulation and burdensome costs.

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