



Health Information Technology Advisory Committee

U.S. Core Data for Interoperability Task Force 2021 Virtual Meeting

Meeting Notes | May 25, 2021, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET

Executive Summary

The focus of the U.S. Core Data for Interoperability Task Force 2021 (USCDI TF 2021) meeting was to continue Phase 2 of its work, which will culminate in two presentations by the co-chairs of the TF's recommendations to the HITAC at future meetings. The TF continued to work on its Tasks 2a, 2b, and 2c recommendations and TF members discussed the presentations and submitted feedback.

There were no public comments submitted by phone, but there was a robust discussion in the chat feature in Adobe Connect.

Agenda

10:30 a.m.	Call to Order/Roll Call
10:35 a.m.	Past Meeting Notes
11:00 a.m.	Finalize 2a, 3b, 2c Recommendations
11:50 a.m.	TF Schedule/Next Meeting
11:55 a.m.	Public Comment
12:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Call to Order

Mike Berry, Designated Federal Officer, Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

Roll Call

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Steven Lane, Sutter Health, Co-Chair

Leslie Kelly Hall, Engaging Patient Strategy, Co-Chair

Ricky Bloomfield, Apple

Hans Buitendijk, Cerner

Grace Cordovano, Enlightening Results

Jim Jirjis, HCA Healthcare

John Kilbourne, Department of Veterans Health Affairs

Les Lenert, Medical University of South Carolina

Clem McDonald, National Library of Medicine

Brett Oliver, Baptist Health

Mark Savage, Savage Consulting

Michelle Schreiber, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Abby Sears, OCHIN



Sasha TerMaat, Epic
Sheryl Turney, Anthem, Inc.
Daniel Vreeman, RTI International
Denise Webb, Indiana Hemophilia and Thrombosis Center

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Ken Kawamoto, University of Utah Health
Aaron Miri, University of Texas at Austin, Dell Medical School and UT Health Austin
Andrew Truscott, Accenture

ONC STAFF

Mike Berry, Branch Chief, Policy Coordination, Office of the Policy (ONC); Designated Federal Officer
Al Taylor, Medical Informatics Officers, Office of Technology (ONC)

General Themes

TOPIC: REVIEW DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The USCDI TF 2021 focused on Phase 2 of its work. Recommendations from Tasks 2a, 2b and 2c will be presented to the HITAC on June 9, 2021. The TF will work on Task 3 over the summer, which is due and will be presented at the HITAC's September 9, 2021, meeting.

Key Specific Points of Discussion

TOPIC: USCDI TF 2021 HOUSEKEEPING

The USCDI TF 2021 co-chairs welcomed members to the meeting, briefly reviewed the agenda, and highlighted the following housekeeping items:

- USCDI TF 2021 meeting materials, past meeting summaries, presentations, audio recordings, and final transcriptions are posted on the website dedicated to the TF located at <https://www.healthit.gov/hitac/committees/us-core-data-interoperability-task-force-2021>
- The TF will continue to meet weekly on Tuesdays at the same time to discuss Phase 2 of its work, and any breaks in the meeting schedule will be announced.

TOPIC: FINALIZE 2A, 2B, 2C RECOMMENDATIONS

Steven summarized the USCDI TF 2021's previous work on Task 2a, 2b, and 2c, and discussed the TF's next steps and plans for Phase 3 of its work. It was previously announced that the TF's responses to the remaining tasks would be due to the HITAC by September 9, 2021, but the TF has previously discussed delivering its recommendations for Tasks 2b and 2c to the HITAC at its June 9, 2021, meeting. Based on TF discussions at the previous meeting, the TF would like to provide recommendations regarding Tasks 2a, 2b, and 2c at the June meeting, leaving recommendations regarding Task 3 to be delivered in September. The TF's remaining tasks include:

- Task 2: Evaluate the USCDI expansion process and provide HITAC with recommendations for:
 - 2a - ONDEC submission system improvements
 - 2b - Evaluation criteria and process used to assign levels to submitted data classes and elements
 - 2c - Prioritization process used by ONC to select new data classes and elements for draft USCDI v2
- Task 3: Recommend ONC priorities for USCDI version 3 (USCDI v3) submission cycle

Al and Steven presented the USCDI TF 2021's draft recommendations in a shared Google document, which members had been invited to review and provide feedback on over the past few weeks. Al and the co-chairs



have spent time cleaning up the recommendations, and AI has also started to use them to build the TF's official letter to the HITAC. Steven began by discussing Task 2a recommendations related to the ONC New Data Element and Class (ONDEC) submission systems. Members were invited to discuss draft general recommendations for improving the system and updates to processes related to the submitter details, data classes/elements, use cases, and challenges. Steven stated that all existing 2a recommendations had now been reviewed and dealt with by the TF.

Then, Steven presented the draft Task 2b recommendations related to the evaluation and leveling criteria and the draft Task 2c recommendations, regarding the prioritization criteria. The co-chairs explained that these recommendations will be completed and submitted in time to inform ONC's published leveling criteria anticipated in July for the USCDI v3 submission cycle. TF members submitted feedback and discussed the draft recommendations, and the co-chairs took note of suggestions. Work is underway to include them in the USCDI TF 2021 recommendations to the HITAC.

Task 3 work will pick up again, following a short break and in preparation for another presentation to the HITAC in September.

DISCUSSION:

- Steven noted that he added a comment from Mark that suggested that submitters might opt to receive an email alert when others have submitted the same **or a similar** element in ONDEC.
 - AI discussed how ONC's email alert system is currently designed to send alerts when changes are made to the submitter's data element.
 - TF members agreed to the suggestion, and AI will include it in the final recommendations.
- Steven highlighted a suggestion for Task 2a that ONC identify gaps in the current USCDI and encourage/support submissions by stakeholders to close them as part of the periodic review of ONDEC. Steven noted that, in the 2020 USCDI submission cycle, ONC submitted some items that were felt to represent gaps in the current USCDI and observed that it would be preferable if these submissions came from stakeholders outside of ONC, with ONC closing the gap if no willing submitters could be identified. Steven proposed to include this suggestion in the TF's recommendations.
- AI suggested that the TF remove its 2a recommendation that patient stories may be submitted via embedded links, as ONC already allows for URL-embedding as a basic function of ONDEC.
 - TF members agreed to remove this suggestion.
- Steven shared the following Task 2b recommendation, noting that, in the past, ONC has focused on supporting majority use cases that apply to most patients or providers because everything in the USCDI is intended to go into the Standards Version Advancement Process (SVAP) process and later be included in requirements for certification. The TF has had a number of discussions regarding the desirability of supporting some minority use cases so as to support the disenfranchised. The co-chairs shared the following recommendation and asked for TF member feedback:
 - "ONC should support minority use cases where possible. When considering minority use cases, evaluation should include identification of where the use case can be supported within existing/compatible mature data elements/classes and provide direction to stakeholders to support implementation and use. (E.g., specifying what note types should be used for exchanging Coroners Reports, Organ transplant harvest reports, etc.)"
 - Leslie added that this suggestion came from Clem's suggestion that existing data should be repurposed for additional use cases when possible as "low hanging fruit."
 - Sasha shared that she did not understand the meaning behind the recommendation until the co-chairs shared the background information. She warned the TF against creating a situation in which the USCDI is too narrow and affects the certification process. She suggested that supporting commentary be added:



- “This change is meant to support minority use cases insofar as possible within the current constraints of USCDI. Final published versions of USCDI are currently intended to be broadly applicable to all certified HIT applications. If we are going to focus on narrow use cases, ONC would need to update certification to accommodate. For example, today a specialty product would be used in a transplant workflow. It doesn’t make sense for every electronic health record (EHR) system to need to meet the data needs of a specialty transplant module, but that would be the consequence of today’s certification model. If narrower use cases than “everyone” go into USCDI, then ONC needs to differentiate those use cases in certification.
- Leslie clarified that the TF has previously referred to the USCDI as a “nest,” where items that have lower levels of maturity can be “incubated.” Through prioritization and inclusion in either a draft or final published version, the USCDI can send signals to the industry to drive development of needed standards. Inclusion in the USCDI may not necessarily mean an item will be included in the SVAP process right away.
- Sasha disagreed and stated, while foreshadowing future items for industry focus is helpful, there will be data elements that should be viewable but that certain types of systems will never need to capture. In response, Leslie asked if the focus could be on “interoperable and viewable,” and not on collection. Sasha suggested specifying what certification is today, which states that every item in the USCDI must be both captured and viewable.
- Hans suggested differentiating between the USCDI process and the published versions of the USCDI. He reiterated Sasha’s point that today, to be certified, a system must support all of the specified version of USCDI. The TF should clarify that it recognizes that limitation today and recommend that the USCDI be more stratified for certification in the future. He suggested changing “EHRs” to “HIT” (health IT) in the framing text. Also, he suggested that the TF recognize that the USCDI will change, long-term, to allow for certification, even if the HIT system does not support the entire USCDI.
- Abby asked about a data element that would be used as an example and requested to discuss related use cases. She emphasized potential implications for health equity and suggested that social determinants of health data (SDOH) will become more important.
- Steven discussed the example of previous USCDI TF leads’ work on supporting use cases for transplants. He stated that the use case of an organ transplant harvest report might necessitate the use of a field (notes/otherwise) indicating that a patient has been declared brain dead and their organs can be used for transplant. This is clearly a minority use case across all systems certified to the USCDI, but he noted the potential importance of its inclusion.
- Abby thanked Steven and other TF members for sharing examples and suggested narrowing the text to focus on health equity. TF members discussed how to change the language and submitted suggestions in the chat via Adobe.
- TF members agreed to support Hans’ suggestion that ONC explore how the USCDI could enable stratification of data classes/elements in such a way that not all certified HIT would need to support certain data. AI clarified that Hans’ recommendation would allow for partial adoption of the USCDI, and Hans confirmed that was his intent. He described how this would benefit HIT systems, which are not monolithic.
- Denise endorsed Hans’ suggestions and stated that provider organizations would be more helped by stratification as they look at purchasing/using various HIT systems.
- TF members discussed wording, shared suggestions, and agreed to the following recommendation to capture the intent of their conversation:



- “ONC should explore how USCDI could enable stratification of data classes/elements so that not all certified HIT products are required to support all data where not needed. E.g., EHRs marketed to and used in small office practices do not need to support data used only in acute care settings.”
- Steven shared updates to the periodic review section of Task 2b, and TF members did not raise any concerns. Steven and AI confirmed that the 2b items are complete.
- Steven shared the following Task 2c recommendation around prioritization and highlighted the supporting commentary that was included following the recommendation:
 - “When prioritizing items, ONC should separately assess Technical Maturity (e.g., based on the existence of vocabulary/semantic standards, structural/syntax standards, implementation guides, testing, implementation, and use) and Priority (e.g., based on mitigating health inequity/disparities, responding to the needs of underserved stakeholders, and addressing public health and other identified priority use cases.)”
 - Michelle voiced her support for the inclusion of high-priority use cases along with prioritization by technical maturity. She stated that getting items into the final, published USCDI forces the ecosystem to adopt to finally use them.
 - Mark stated that the recommendation applies more generally than "within levels," including among levels and adoption in USCDI. He suggested adding this to the text.
 - Steven discussed supporting commentary that stated that inclusion of immature or incompletely specified data classes or elements in the USCDI can have negative unintended effects, including the SVAP and certification processes limiting/slowing iteration as maturity increases, no specification (causing delays to adoption of entire USCDI), and differences in implementer approaches that jeopardize semantic interoperability.
- Steven asked TF members to review and comment on the following draft Task 2c recommendations:
 - Items that are identified as high priority but of insufficient technical maturity for inclusion in USCDI should be communicated to the standards community for expedited work and to stakeholders for consideration for pilot use and iterative deployment independent of their inclusion in SVAP or requirement by the certification process.
 - Clarify that a published “draft” USCDI version may include classes/elements that may not be quite ready for inclusion in the next final published version and that would be included if certain criteria are met (e.g., final publication of an IG) prior to advancement in the next version. Those items that are not able to advance should be carried forward for potential inclusion in the subsequent version.
 - Advancement into a final published version of USCDI requires a minimum degree of technical maturity/readiness. In particular, published implementation guides are important for scalable national deployment of a data element/class.
 - Ricky voiced his support for this recommendation.
 - Clarify that the requirement for a data class/element within ONC certification and/or a CMS initiative is not an absolute requirement for inclusion in USCDI.
 - Hans discussed related challenges, which included the interplay between the questions of what what is included in SVAP, what is in the certification rule, and what a certified software product is supposed to adhere to. SVAP cannot technically pick standards up for eligibility that are not in regulations, so the TF must be careful that USCDI does not move too far ahead of SVAP. Upgrading certification can go beyond SVAP, so the TF must determine the role of USCDI. He emphasized that the TF must balance all of these processes.
 - Sasha agreed and discussed the hypothetical example of adding Occupation as a data class. She explained how the TF’s recommendations are constrained by the interplay between certification standards, the SVAP process, prerequisite underlying FHIR versions, and the data elements in the USCDI.



- AI suggested that the example they discussed was a vocabulary standard, not an exchange standard, so it would not need to go through SVAP.
 - Hans responded that if the USCDI is vocabulary but that if other standards (C-CDA, US Core) are being referenced, they are used to support all of the USCDI. He reiterated his support for stratification but suggested that certification requirements become complicated when different structures do not have an aligned cadence.
 - Leslie shared the following recommendation, which would apply to the discussion and be added to Task 3: “Clarify the data relationships and the versioning cadence between USCDI, DRS, EHI, SVAP, InfoBlocking requirements, etc., and recommendations for standards to achieve interoperability and access with an emphasis on achieving data parity for all.” Hans voiced his support for this recommendation.
 - Steven ensured that AI understood comments submitted by Hans and Sasha and asked if the TF’s recommendation sufficiently captures their comments. Hans suggested that more conversation is needed to provide clarification around how all of the parts are tied together.
 - AI responded that there are two parts: the process used to add the data elements to USCDI is based on the feasibility of implementing them in the exchange standards (C-CDA and US Core) and that, hypothetically, the TF and ONC might create a version of the USCDI that is unimplementable. Therefore, it would not be included in SVAP. He emphasized that the SVAP comment process will ensure that new data elements should be implementable and stated that ONC shares this concern.
 - TF members discussed the role of SVAP and its purpose in connection with the USCDI. Ricky shared the definition of the SVAP, and AI explained that the publication of the USCDI v2 in July 2021 will allow it to be considered during the upcoming SVAP cycle, allowing developers to consider it then for adoption in certified products. AI explained that ONC would better communicate clarifications around how adopting the USCDI creates considerations for SVAP.
 - Hans stated that developers looking to certify a new product can certify to standards specified in the SVAP and do not need to go back to support older versions of standards that have been advanced if they are new to the market/have not been certified in the past. TF members discussed wording around a recommendation that certification should encourage adoption of new standards versions going forward. Ricky cautioned that certifying to new versions of standards might cause practical issues around implementing to scale.
 - Steven suggested that, though this discussion is interesting, it does not fall in scope for the TF’s work to make recommendations for updates to the USCDI.
- The TF discussed and agreed to include the recommendation that ONC continue to identify and prioritize data elements that are generated automatically and/or collected and exist routinely within HIT systems.

Action Items

As their homework, USCDI TF 2021 members were asked to review the leveling and prioritization criteria in the TF’s recommendations document. Members were asked to make comments in the margin to note any edits to recommendations and to complete work by the close of business on Thursday, May 27, 2021.

The USCDI TF 2021 co-chairs and AI will then sort through them to create recommendations to inform the final TF recommendations letter to the HIAC.

TF members were encouraged to review meeting materials on the TF website at <https://www.healthit.gov/hitac/committees/us-core-data-interoperability-task-force-2021>



Public Comment

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA PHONE

There were no public comments received via phone.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA ADOBE CONNECT

Mike Berry (ONC): Welcome to the USCDI Task Force. We will be starting soon.

Jim Jirjis: Jim Jirjis Here

Steven Lane: Good morning! Always we strongly invite the public to provide input here in the chat as well as in the 5 minutes provided at the end of our taskforce agenda.

Michelle Schreiber: Steven - congratulations to your daughter!

Leslie Kelly Hall: TF members received a link in email a few minutes ago,

Hans Buitendijk: Claims data is EHI, but not all HIT manages that.

Leslie Kelly Hall: Hans? Recommendation: USCDI may need additional stratification to support view and exchange vs view aexchange *[sic]* and gather.

Abby Sears: That is what I was asking....thanks for the use case....it helps a lot....

Hans Buitendijk: Blood transfusion also has steps of the process that not all EHRs need to manage.

Sasha TerMaat: Abby, an example from our recommendations on USCDI V2 was Discharge Disposition. Should be captured in inpatient contexts, but, in ambulatory contexts it's the read-only that's important.

Abby Sears: What if we were more specific around equity?

Abby Sears: What if we narrowed the discussion then....I see your point now...

Hans Buitendijk: @Leslie: Would change to "USCDI should enable *[sic]* stratification of data classes/elements where not all HIT need to support certain aspect."

Sasha TerMaat: If we narrowed this recommendation or gave more context on the intent that would alleviate the concern I have on implications for certification.

Grace Cordovano, PhD, BCPA: In looking at the other side of coin, being able to report whether someone is an organ donor is not a minority use case.

Sasha TerMaat: Grace, good point, we need to differentiate what we DO want in all HIT and what should be more targeted.

Sasha TerMaat: AI, if you double click on the page break I think you can collapse the page margins for display of more of the table.

Leslie Kelly Hall: @grace organ donation is not a minority use case. It is gathered in some systems and not all, but needs to be exchanged everywhere

Mark Savage: Suggested edit: ". . . not all certified HIT products *[sic]* are required to support all data where not needed . . ."



Al Taylor, ONC: Nice @Sasha. learn something new every day

Daniel Vreeman: +1 on the 2c recommendation. I think it concisely summarizes a very rich discussion.

Mark Savage: Think the recommendation applies more generally than "within levels", including among levels and adoption in USCDI.

Leslie Kelly Hall: Clarify the data relationships and the versioning cadence between USCDI, DRS, EHI, SVAP, InfoBlocking requirements, etc., and recommendations for standards to achieve interoperability and access with an emphasis on achieving data parity for all.

Mark Savage: Not backwards compatible?

Leslie Kelly Hall: Certification should encourage adoption of most current standards.

Hans Buitendijk: Riki: You said it better. Thank you!

Grace Cordovano, PhD, BCPA: +1 Mark

Abby Sears: agree

Abby Sears: Leslie and Steven....thank you for your leadership on this taskforce. You have been excellent stewards of our goals.

Mark Savage: +1 Abby

Leslie Kelly Hall: Thanks so much Abby!

Clement McDonald: am very late Sorry- guess I misses most of it

Sheryl Turney: thank you Both for leading this. Steven, Congrats on your daughter's graduation.

Leslie Kelly Hall: clem ONC should support minority use cases where possible. When considering minority use cases, evaluation should include identification of where the use case can be supported within existing/compatible mature data elements/classes and provide direction to stakeholders to support implementation and use. (E.g., specifying what note types should be

Leslie Kelly Hall: your thoughts

Resources

[USCDI TF 2021 Website](#)

[USCDI TF 2021 – May 25, 2021, Meeting Agenda](#)

[USCDI TF 2021 – May 25, 2021, Meeting Slides](#)

[USCDI TF 2021 – May 25, 2021, Webpage](#)

[USCDI TF Meeting Calendar Webpage](#)

Adjournment

Steven thanked everyone for their work at the current meeting. The date of the next USCDI TF 2021 will be announced. The TF might cancel the Tuesday, June 1, 2021, meeting, pending work on its recommendations documentation, and the June 8, 2021, meeting has already been canceled, as the TF will present to the HITAC the next day. A meeting will be held on June 15, 2021, to discuss HITAC feedback.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. E.T.