

# HHS Health IT Alignment Program Overview

Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy/  
Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information  
Technology (ASTP/ONC)

HHS Office of the Secretary

# Purpose

- ASTP/ONC to Lead a Department-wide management approach to promote greater alignment of health IT-related activities across all related HHS funding (grants, cooperative agreements, contracts) and regulatory/guidance activities.

# The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act

## The Program builds on authorities under The HITECH Act

- **Section 13111 of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act** requires agencies...when implementing, acquiring, or upgrading health IT systems used for the direct exchange of individually identifiable health information between agencies and with non-Federal entities, to utilize, where available, health IT systems and products that meet standards and implementation specifications adopted by ONC under section 3004 of the PHSA.
- **Section 13112 of the HITECH Act** specifies that agencies...shall require in contracts or agreements with health care providers, health plans, or health insurance issuers that as each provider, plan, or issuer implements, acquires, or upgrades health IT systems, it shall utilize, where available, health IT systems and products that meet standards and implementation specifications adopted under section 3004 of the PHSA.



# Program Description

**Directed ASTP to establish and oversee a consistent HHS approach to the inclusion of health IT requirements in grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and rulemaking/guidance activities.**

1. Institutes a Department-wide management approach to promote greater alignment of health IT-related activities.
2. Directs ASTP to engage with HHS agencies to align and coordinate health IT-related activities in support of HHS health IT and interoperability goals.
3. Directs Operating Divisions and Staff Divisions (OpDivs/StaffDivs):
  - a. To the extent legally permissible, to include standard health IT language in applicable grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and rulemaking/guidance actions to ensure alignment of the Department's health IT investments; and
  - b. To maximize opportunities to align HHS's health IT requirements and investments by engaging with ASTP when the OpDiv/StaffDiv initiates a major health IT-related activity.

# Background and Program Goals

In 2022, the Department instituted the HHS Health IT Alignment Program.

## Program Goal 01

Establish a consistent HHS-wide approach to standard health IT requirements across HHS agencies and programs to eliminate program and data silos and advance the effectiveness and efficiency of Department programs and policies.

## Program Goal 02

Fully exercise HHS authorities to promote cross-agency collaboration and better support each agency's mission.

## Program Goal 03

Reinforce department goals for nationwide interoperability through consistency in funding and policies related to health IT activities.

## Program Goal 04

Provide Secretary-level and cross-agency visibility and awareness of significant health IT activities.

## Key Elements

- **Standard Health IT Language** - The Program directs ASTP to establish and oversee a consistent HHS approach to the inclusion of health IT requirements in grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and rulemaking/guidance.
- **Health IT-related Activities and Data Integration** - The Program also directs ASTP to engage with HHS agencies to align and coordinate health IT-related activities in support of HHS health IT and interoperability goals.
- **Tailored Technical Assistance** - The Program also directs ASTP to provide technical assistance to OpDivs/StaffDivs on health IT-related programs/activities as needed.

# Investing in the Department

**HHS spending on health IT-related activities has grown dramatically in recent years:**

- **It is critical that we head off further proliferation of ad-hoc health IT programs and data silos that:**
  - Undercut the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's policies and programs
  - Are costly for federal and state agencies and private sector partners to create and maintain
  - Have no synergies across programs
  - Impose significant burden on health care providers, technology developers, and other health care stakeholders
- **Program will allow OpDivs/StaffDivs to work better together to support each agency's mission and Department goals:**
  - Identify collaboration/synergy opportunities with other HHS (and non-HHS) agencies
  - Help agencies use full scope of available HHS authorities and capabilities
  - Reinforce Department's health IT and interoperability goals by multiplying the impact of federal purchasing power in the market
  - Provide HHS leadership with Department-level visibility of key health IT activities



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## Reach out via phone, web or email



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Feedback Form: <https://www.healthit.gov/form/healthit-feedback-form>



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