

How Far Away is Health Information Exchange Interoperability?



At CNSI, we are working to create and implement solutions in the pursuit of effective health information exchanges (HIE). The scope of the issue, however, is staggering. Public and private entities are trying to keep up with the necessary data sharing in today's health care environment.

Providers and payers are exploring ways of sharing health data across regions, providers, payers, public health agencies and other stakeholders in the health care continuum.

Sharing of data across various HIEs, called interoperability, is a centerpiece of the Federal Office of the National Coordinator of Health IT's (ONC) long-term roadmap, and thus a focus of the entire health IT industry. The ONC says HIE interoperability would, "Significantly improve quality, safety and efficiency of health care delivery."

Recently, however, a recent study looked into the issue and found some less than desirable results. The study concludes a coordinated HIE system is still 10 years away, based on the results of a survey of nearly 2,000 health plan members, 800 physicians, 700 hospital executives, 1,200 insurers and 500 health information technology vendor staffers.

According to Fierce Health IT, the outlet that reported on the study, issues are rooted in business models that rely on federal funding:

"Six in 10 of the nation's 220 operational HIEs were funded by \$546 million in HITECH funds. Without further grants, HIEs are

forced to assess high fees while developing other revenue streams. However, health insurers participate in fewer than 31 percent of public HIEs, and 86 percent of payer respondents refuse to pay the public exchanges' annual fees.

A recent study by the Brookings Institution reinforces these findings, concluding that,

“Unless there is a system in which a part of the financial savings that occur as a result of health information exchange is shared between the entities that engage in exchanging information, there is no reason to believe that the providers will continue to actively exchange health information with each other.”

Despite the challenges, CNSI is at the forefront of creating HIE solutions, especially in Medicaid systems. Our approach to this challenge is to work from the “inside out.” By modernizing an existing Medicaid Management Information System platform to create a robust foundation and platform for HIE, so an agency can take the first step to creating the data sharing environment required to move forward with interoperability.

How do you think HIE interoperability can be incentivized in the market? Do you agree or disagree with the study's findings? Tweet us [@CNSICorp](https://twitter.com/CNSICorp) to let us know!

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