



Focus Group: Interoperability

Topic: Patient Engagement

Health IT Modernization Program

July 17, 2025



Zoom Meeting Guide

Please
MUTE



Microphone

- Click to mute or unmute yourself
- Red slash indicates you are on mute.
- Unmute to participate in the discussion.

Please
Use Chat
Feature



Chat

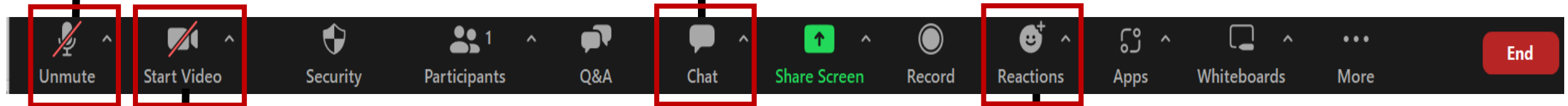
- Engage in the discussion using the chat, if you are not able to unmute.

Camera

- Click to turn camera on or off.
- Red slash indicates camera is off.

Reactions

- Send an emoji to participate in the discussion.
- Raise your hand to let the facilitator know you would like to speak.



Technical Notes and Support

Meeting Guide



- If you lose connectivity during the session, **simply re-click your access link** to re-access the meeting
- If you experience technical difficulties, **send a note using the chat box OR email Modernization@ihs.gov** to connect with a Coordinator for assistance
- If you are dialing-in via Phone – Use *6 to mute and unmute and *9 to raise your hand

Enjoy the session!

Disclaimer



Focus Groups (FGs) inform and support decisions and governance of the Health Information Technology (IT) Modernization Program. FGs are NOT decision-making bodies and at NO time will focus groups provide consensus, recommendations or advice to the Agency that would trigger Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App. § 1-16 additional legal requirements.

Meeting Courtesies



- Participation in the focus group is voluntary and has no term limits
- Be prompt, be prepared, and be ready with constructive feedback
- Share constructive individual feedback via engagement during the meeting
- Communicate with grace and respect for all participants
- Be engaged, listen attentively and actively, share ideas, ask questions, contribute
- It's all right to refrain from discussing specific topics if you are uncomfortable
- All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers
- Maintain others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group
- Any topics or ideas not directly related to the current agenda will be 'promptly parked' and revisited at an appropriate time



Welcome & Introductions

Dave Zimmerman - *Interoperability Focus
Group Facilitator*

Charles Cross - *Engineering Branch, DHITMO*

Bobby Villines - *HIT Interoperability and
Health Information Exchange Manager*

Overview

Purpose

The Focus Group will help the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to understand the strategies used by other Federal agencies, Tribes, and Urban Indian Organizations to modernize their Health IT capabilities resulting in performance changes in healthcare delivery. The participants from the Focus Groups in the areas of Health IT Implementation, Interoperability, and Data Management and Analytics will inform decisions regarding organizational readiness, planning, and implementation.

Agenda

- Introduction
- Patient Engagement
 - Enhancements
 - Tools & Strategies
- Closing Remarks

Desired Outcomes

- Improve shared understanding among Focus Group Participants
- Capture issues and lessons learned data
- **Improve the system and tool** to support the patient's and healthcare teams' utilization of a new electronic health record
- Your **input** is important and provides valuable information and understanding the end-user needs necessary to support the modernization efforts

Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups is to share information and expertise concerning issues of interest to all I/T/U organizations regardless of their selected EHR solution.

Health IT Implementation

Help understand the lessons learned, challenges, and strategies used by other organizations to modernize their health IT capabilities.



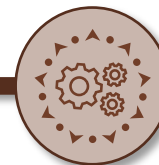
Interoperability

Review and suggest strategies, operational requirements, clinical practice standards, and performance measures that inform the interoperability solution design and project planning.



Data Management and Analytics

Review and suggest strategies that support effective data use, security and privacy controls, and standards.



Invitation to Participate in Focus Groups

Tribes and UIOs are encouraged to engage in the modernization strategy via focus groups.

Participation will be open to all I/T/U organizations

Eligible individuals include:

- Volunteers in health IT implementation, interoperability, and data management and analytics
- Participants with health IT experience, RPMS, various EHRs, business and clinical workflows, interoperability, informatics, organizational change, facility management, privacy, and other relevant domains

**Note: Participation is not limited to one focus group*

Email Modernization@ihs.gov to volunteer for focus group participation.



**At this time, vendors cannot participate*

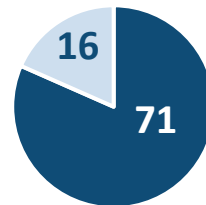
Statement of Interest

The IHS desires to learn which tribal and urban health care entities have an interest in becoming a tenant on the shared system

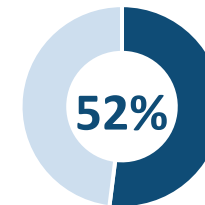
Opportunity for Tribes and urban Indian organizations to formally express interest in participating in the PATH EHR solution



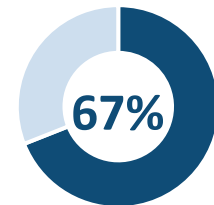
- The IHS shared a Statement of Interest form where tribal and urban health care entities can indicate their interest in partnering with the IHS on the shared enterprise solution. The Statement of Interest is **NON-BINDING** and will connect partners to support system configuration, organizational assessment, and implementation planning.
- The Statement of Interest was attached to a [Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader letter](#) published on June 29, 2023.
- The IHS has received **91** Statement of Interest documents to date.



71 tribal partners and 16 urban Indian organizations have submitted a Statement of Interest to date; 4 sites not participating



52% already use commercial health IT solutions other than or alongside RPMS



67% of respondents desire to implement **early** in the Modernization Program

As of May 20, 2025

Health IT Modernization Guiding Principles



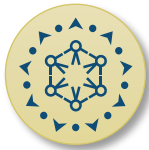
DESIGN

solutions that deliver culturally appropriate care, quality, safety, and improved patient outcomes



EMPHASIZE

usability and human-centered design



ENGAGE

patients in their health journey through improved patient access



ADOPT

enterprise technology solutions that support continuity of care



PARTNER

across I/T/U for collaborative decision-making that is fully informed by clinical and business users in the field



CONFIGURE

solutions to meet organizational requirements with minimal customization



UTILIZE

recognized best practices across clinical and business processes



PROVIDE

timely and complete communication, training, and tools to support a successful deployment

2024 Focus Group Highlights



- Major Topics Discussed:
 - **Centralized Interoperability Suite:** Opening discussions took place on CIS as a group of applications that facilitate the presentation of visit data for patients, the secure messaging between provider and patient or between providers, the matching of patients with their data, and the exchange of visit data within and outside of the Indian Health System. Examples: Four Directions Hub (4DH), Trusted Exchange Framework & Common Agreement (TEFCA), and the United States Core Data for Interoperability (USCDI v3)
 - **Interfaces:** Robust discussion on health insurance payers and the challenges associated with these reporting obligations. It was highlighted that the manual data entry and reconciliation efforts required due to the inability of payers to access systems directly, emphasizing the need for more efficient data exchange between healthcare providers and payers to reduce administrative burdens and improve the accuracy of reporting
 - **Transitioning:** Engagement took place on challenges of transitioning from RPMS to Oracle, specifically the lack of case management and utilization review (UR) functionality in the new EHR system
 - **Patient Consent / Data Sovereignty:** Concerns about patient consent/permissions and data sovereignty in tribal communities are raised, emphasizing the challenges in sharing and the importance of tribal regulations

A scenic landscape photograph featuring a calm lake in the middle ground, surrounded by dense forests. The trees show signs of autumn, with some leaves turning yellow and orange. In the foreground, there are bare tree branches and some green foliage. A large, white, semi-transparent circle is centered over the image, containing the text 'Topic 1: Patient Engagement' in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

Topic 1: Patient Engagement

Discussion



- EHR interoperability, the ability of different systems to share and use data, is strongly tied to patient engagement.
- It empowers patients by providing access to their records, facilitating communication with providers, and enabling informed decision-making.
- This enhanced engagement leads to improved health outcomes and patient satisfaction.

Discussion

1. Training and Support:

- Comprehensive training for both clinicians and patients is essential.
 - Patients should be educated on how to use patient portals for appointments, accessing records, and communicating with providers.
- Providing ongoing support, especially after go-live, helps users adapt to the system and resolve any issues
- Identifying and addressing any usability issues encountered by patients is crucial for fostering engagement

Discussion

2. Communication and Collaboration:

- Establish clear communication channels between providers and patients, leveraging secure messaging within the EHR
- Involve key stakeholders, including clinicians, staff, and IT personnel, in the implementation planning and decision-making process
- Foster a collaborative environment where different teams work together to implement the EHR successfully

Questions

- Did Patient Engagement suffer during the initial EHR rollout or latest EHR transition?
- What patient engagement areas are you most concerned with PATH EHR implementation?
- What Patient Engagement methods have been successful in your experience - Tribal Pamphlets, FB Groups, etc.





Topic 2: Patient Engagement

Tools & Strategies

Discussion

Digital Tools & Platforms:

- Patient Portals
- Mobile Apps
- Telehealth & Remote Monitoring
- Virtual Assistants
- Online Health Communities



Discussion

Engagement Strategies:

- Shared Decision-Making:
 - Involving patients in treatment decisions, respecting their values and preferences
- Personalized Communication:
 - Tailoring messages and resources to individual patient needs and preferences, using preferred channels (e.g., text, email, phone)
- Patient Education:
 - Providing clear and accessible information about health conditions, treatment options, and self-care strategies

Questions

- Did you lose any patient engagement /Patient Satisfaction platforms in your last EHR transition?
- What did you do to mitigate any losses / reductions?
- Do you have any metrics of which engagement method is your favorite (text, email, phone)?

References



- IHS Health Modernization webpage: <https://www.ihs.gov/hit/>
- IHS Health IT Modernization Implementation Focus Group page: <https://www.ihs.gov/hit/get-involved/focus-groups/>



Planning for Next Meeting

Dave Zimmerman - *Interoperability Focus*
Group Facilitator

Interoperability Timeline





Upcoming Engagements

Dave Zimmerman - *Interoperability Focus*
Group Facilitator

2025 TRIBAL CONSULTATION *and* URBAN CONFER

with the Health IT Modernization Program



**PATH EHR SCOPE
AND CAPABILITIES**
AUGUST 7



**PILOT SITE IMPLEMENTATION
PATHWAY**
NOVEMBER 6



Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer (TC/UC) sessions provide an opportunity for our tribal and urban Indian organization partners to hear about Program updates from IHS leadership and provide input about modernization-focused topics for continued improvement of patient outcomes across Indian Country.

Participate in

THE HEALTH IT MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AWARENESS SURVEY



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM OUR
**TRIBAL & URBAN
PARTNERS**

SCAN ME



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or by following us on social media



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LinkedIn



X (formerly Twitter)

