



Focus Group Interoperability

Topic: Patient Portals

Health IT Modernization Program

February 12, 2026



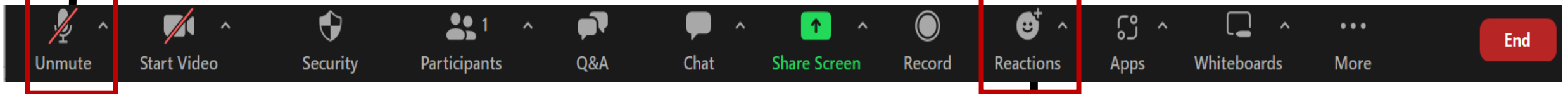
Zoom Meeting Guide

Please
MUTE



Microphone

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



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

Fabiana Beltran – Facilitator

Duane Roszynai – PMO Operations Program Manager

Bobby Villines – Health Systems Specialist

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 Portal: Benefits, Limitations, Identity Proofing Benefits, Minors Privacy and Protection, Common Patient Engagement Activities
- Polling and Discussion
- Closing Remarks

Desired Outcomes

- Improve shared understanding among Focus Group participants
- Capture issues and lessons learned data
- Improve the system and tool to support patient and healthcare utilization of a new electronic health record

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.



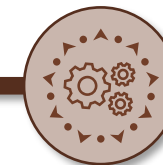
Interoperability

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*

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.



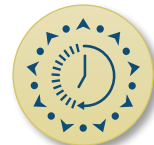
CONFIGURE

solutions to meet organizational requirements with minimal customization.



UTILIZE

recognized best practices across clinical and business processes.



PROVIDE

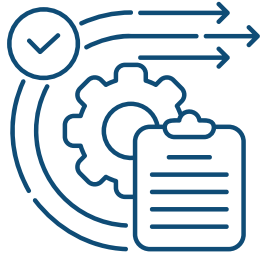
timely and complete communication, training, and tools to support a successful deployment.

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the middle ground, surrounded by a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and brown. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds. In the foreground, there are bare tree branches and some leaves with a mix of green and brown. A large, white, semi-transparent circle is centered over the image, containing the text "Topic: Patient Portals" in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

**Topic: Patient
Portals**

Patient Portal Benefits

Access



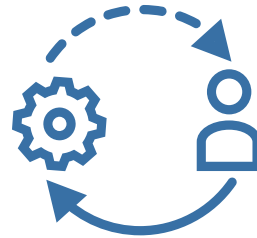
Easy access to health information and appointment management in a secure environment

Messaging



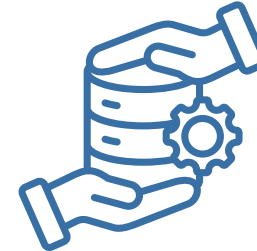
Improved patient engagement and secure messaging

Communication



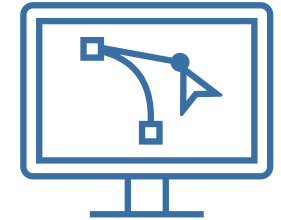
Enhanced communication between providers and patients

Interoperability



Ability to access health information from multiple providers

Administrative



Reduced administrative burden and costs

Common Personal Health Information (PHI)



Clinical Information

- Diagnoses and problem lists
- Visit summaries and clinical notes



Test and Imaging Results

- Laboratory test results
- Radiology and imaging reports



Medications

- Current and past medication lists
- Dosage instructions
- Prescription refill status



Medical History

- Past procedures and surgeries
- Family and social history
- Vaccination history and records



Appointments and Care Management

- Upcoming and past appointments
- Referrals
- Care plans and discharge instructions



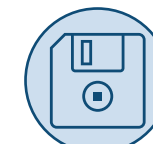
Secure Communications

- Messages exchanged with healthcare providers
- Patient-submitted questionnaires and forms



Administrative and Insurance Information

- Insurance coverage details
- Billing statements and payment history



Patient-Generated Health Data

- Home-monitored data (e.g., blood pressure, glucose readings)
- *Not all portals offer this capability

Common Patient Portal Limitations

Real-Time or Emergency Care

Portals do not provide urgent or emergency medical services. Messages are not monitored continuously.

Immediate Updates

Information may not appear in real time. Some results may be held until reviewed by a provider.

Complete or Unfiltered Medical Records

Not all clinical notes or internal provider documentation may be available. Certain information may be restricted.

Care Outside the Organization

Records from external providers or health systems may be incomplete or unavailable.

Clinical Interpretation or Medical Advice

Portals cannot present test results without detailed clinical interpretation and do not replace direct conversations.

Clinical Decision-Making Authority

Patients cannot use portals to approve, deny, or override clinical decisions or treatment plans.

Guaranteed Two-Way Communication

While secure messaging is available, response times are not guaranteed.

Non-Healthcare Services

Portals do not provide social services, insurance authorization decisions, or legal guidance.

Identity Proofing Benefits

PRIVACY

Protecting Patient Privacy

Personal health records contain highly sensitive information. Without strong identity proofing, unauthorized individuals could gain access, leading to privacy violations and potential harm.

FRAUD

Preventing Fraud and Abuse

Identity proofing reduces risks such as medical identity theft, fraudulent billing, or misuse of prescriptions.

RECORDS

Ensuring Accurate Record Matching

Healthcare organizations must confirm that the right patient is linked to the right record. This reduces duplicate records, mismatched test results, or even life-threatening mistakes in treatment.

COMPLIANCE

Regulatory Compliance

HIPAA requires covered entities to implement safeguards to verify identity before granting access to PHI. NIST provides guidelines for identity proofing and patient portal level of assurances.

TRUST

Building Patient Trust

Patients are more likely to use digital health services when they know their identity is verified and their data is secure.

Minors Privacy and Protection

Minor Consent Laws

State laws determine when minors may consent to certain types of care, and right to privacy.

Confidential Information Safeguards

Behavioral health, substance abuse, gender-affirming care.

Age-Based Access Controls

Access and visibility change as a patient transitions from childhood to adolescence and adulthood.

Proxy and Delegated Access Management

Access granted for routine care and must be carefully managed as minors gain access rights.

Restricted Parental/Guardian Access

Limit parental/guardian access to sensitive information when minors consent to care independently.

Authentication and Identity Proofing

Separate credentials may be issued for minors and proxies to prevent shared access.

Compliance with HIPAA and State Law

HIPAA defers to state law regarding minors' rights to access and control their health information.

Education and Transparency

Patients and families should be informed about what information is visible in the portal and why certain data may be restricted.

Audit and Monitoring

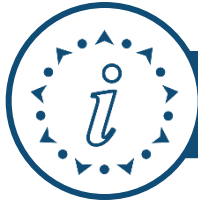
Access to minors' records is logged and monitored to detect inappropriate or unauthorized access.

Common Patient Engagement Activities

- Patient Impact/Needs Assessment
- Early and Transparent Communication
- Clear Communication, Guidance, and Education
- Accessibility and Equity Considerations
- Patient Advisory and Feedback Engagement
- Pilot and Soft Launch
- Feedback and Continuous Improvement
- Ongoing Support and Help Channels
- Onboarding, Enrollment, and Re-Authentication Support
- Training, Reinforcing Privacy, and Security
- Change Management and Trust-Building

Discussion and Questions

Overview

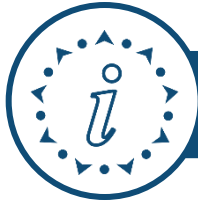


Patient Portal Implementation

- Has anyone implemented a patient portal from the ground up or transitioned to a new patient portal? What worked well and what lessons did you learn?
- What kind of technical challenges did you face (e.g., issues like access, password rules, etc.) when it was originally implemented for facilities?

Discussion and Questions

Overview



Patient Engagement

- How did you generate patient engagement and interest in patient portals?
- What were your challenges in engaging patients?
- What level of support did you have in preparing patients for patient portals?



Upcoming Engagements

Participate in

THE HEALTH IT MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AWARENESS SURVEY

SCAN ME



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM OUR
TRIBAL AND URBAN
PARTNERS!**

Stay Connected with the IHS

Stay informed on the Health IT Modernization Program at www.IHS.gov/HIT
or by following us on social media



Facebook



LinkedIn



X (formerly Twitter)

