

## Goals of Federal Health IT Strategic Plan



The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) has finalised its strategy for the next five years. The Federal Health IT Strategic Plan 2015-2020 aims to promote "effective use of information and technology to help the nation achieve high-quality care, lower costs, a healthy population, and engaged individuals," according to a statement in the ONC website.

The document is based on the recommendations from the Health IT Policy Committee and includes input from an array of some 35 federal partners and more than 400 public comments. The Plan has four strategic goals:

1. Advance person-centred health and self-management;
2. Transform healthcare delivery and community health;
3. Foster research, scientific knowledge and innovation; and
4. Enhance the United States health IT infrastructure.

These goals and their respective objectives and strategies should not be viewed as sequential, but as interdependent with a collective purpose of improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities, the ONC says.

"It is a shift from our prior strategic plan in just that: It puts the person at the centre, with health IT as a support," National Coordinator for Health IT Karen DeSalvo points out. "And aims to facilitate and enable the many important use cases including delivery system reform, scientific advancements such as precision medicine and improvements in public health and preparedness."

Although the Plan focuses on federal strategies, the ONC emphasises that achieving the Plan's goals requires collaboration from private stakeholders and state, territorial, local, and tribal governments. "Efforts across the ecosystem — by individuals, families, caregivers, healthcare entities and providers, public health entities, payers, technology developers, community-based nonprofit organisations, home-based supports, and academic institutions — are also essential," the ONC says.

According to Gretchen Wyatt, senior strategy advisor in ONC's Office of Policy: "When we released the draft plan back in December, all along the goal was to make sure information was available when and where it matters. The idea was to make sure we look at engagement by the broader care team and for those who impact health for families and communities. The structure of the Plan, we hope, reflects that."

Unlike the draft plan, which listed "expand adoption of health IT" as its top aim, in the final Plan the technology is really only the focus of goal four. "The infrastructure is support for goals one, two and three," explains Wyatt. "This is not a national plan for health, but for how health IT can improve health goals."

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