

IT Patient Safety Roadmap Revealed



The U.S. Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has released its Health IT Safety Centre Roadmap, detailing a plan for optimising use of health IT for improved care safety and quality.

In recent years, the increased adoption of health IT and electronic health record (EHR) has seen impressive advances in electronic ordering, clinical decision support and other EHR functions. "At the same time, safety organisations and researchers, health IT users and other stakeholders have found risks and hazards to patient safety associated with these systems and the complex environments in which they are implemented and used," the ONC points out.

Hence, the roadmap calls for establishing a national Health IT Safety Centre that will focus on two interrelated goals: "using health IT to make care safer, and continuously improving the safety of health IT."

Doing that depends on the shared responsibility of many different stakeholders. With the help of RTI International, the ONC has created a task force of health IT safety experts, patient advocates, clinicians, technology developers, healthcare organisations and others to help craft a roadmap towards that goal.

"Task force members repeatedly stressed the importance of having a trusted space where stakeholders could convene to review evidence and jointly develop solutions to critical health IT safety issues," the ONC says. "This theme — collaborate on solutions, informed by evidence — captures the main focus of the proposed centre."

According to the ONC, the new centre would accelerate the establishment of a "culture of safety" across the industry and foster "a national learning system that enables health IT and its users to generate better and safer patient care outcomes."

The task force has identified many health IT safety-related activities that a national centre should support, including collaborating on solutions to address health IT-related safety events and hazards; improving sharing of data on safety events and hazards; better evidence-based reporting on health IT safety; and more education on the appropriate and safe use of health IT.

"As we focus on making our healthcare ecosystem interoperable and building a continually improving learning health system, we need to ensure health IT enables safe, high-quality care," says Dr. Andrew Gettinger, the ONC's Chief Medical Information Officer.

"We also know that doctors, nurses, and other clinicians that are all part of the care team are frustrated by health IT systems that are not coordinated or optimised to their workflow," he adds. "Many of these systems will benefit from additional usability review, safety enhanced design and feedback from the user community."

Source: [Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology](#)

Image credit: RTI International

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