

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation: Specification of the Long Term Care Nursing Home (LTC-NH) Electronic Health Record System (EHR-S) Functional Profile

This project, sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), in conjunction with significant private support, identified the LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile. The Functional Profile has been shared with HL7 and CCHIT.

Lead Agency:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Agency Mission:

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation advises the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on policy development in health, disability and aging, human services, and science and data policy, and provides advice and analysis on economic policy. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE) leads special initiatives, coordinates the Department's evaluation, research and demonstration activities, and manages cross-Department planning activities such as strategic planning, legislative planning and review of regulations. Integral to this role, OASPE conducts research and evaluation studies, develops policy analyses, and estimates the cost and benefits of policy alternatives under consideration by the Department or Congress.

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American Health Care Association/National Centers for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL)
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
National Association for the Support of Long Term Care (NASL)

General Description:

Specification of the Long Term Care Nursing Home (LTC-NH) Electronic Health Record System (EHR-S) Functional Profile

Consensus has emerged that interoperable health information technology (HIT) and electronic health records (EHRs) are needed to improve quality, safety, and effectiveness of health care while simultaneously enhancing efficiency and reducing costs.

The HHS 2004 report entitled, “The Decade of Health Information Technology -- Framework for Strategic Action” recommended establishing private sector certification of HIT products to reduce the risk of product failure and increase the uptake of EHR implementation. HHS subsequently authorized and funded the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT) to specify certification criteria for electronic health records (EHRs) and to implement a process through which EHR products would be certified as meeting the certification criteria. In late 2006, HHS authorized and funded the CCHIT to expand its certification scope to begin addressing EHR products for nursing homes. In March 2007, CCHIT announced that nursing homes would be included in their “Roadmap” for expansion of product certifications. In specifying certification criteria for nursing home EHR products, CCHIT will draw heavily on the requirements published in the 2007 HL7 EHR-System Functional Model

(EHR-S FM) standard (also developed with ASPE funding), and industry specific requirements that are specified in a nursing home-specific Functional Profile.

With the funding provided by ASPE and significant staff resources provided by the long-term care community, the public and private sector sectors specified the Long Term Care Nursing Home (LTC-NH) Electronic Health Record System (EHR-S) Functional Profile. The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile identifies the subset of functions from the HL7 EHR-S FM that reflects the unique aspects and needs for EHR systems in the long term care-nursing home setting. The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile identifies needed EHR functions and criteria in the domains of direct care, supportive services, and information infrastructure.

The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile has been registered by HL7 and will be balloted as an industry standard.

The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile has also been sent to CCHIT to help inform their efforts related to certification of nursing home EHR products. CCHIT will use the LTC EHR-S Functional Profile as a reference as they develop the functionality, interoperability, and security requirements for certified nursing home EHR system products.

- Excellence:*** What makes this project exceptional?
- Significance:*** How is this research relevant to older persons, populations and/or an aging society?
- Effectiveness:*** What is the impact and/or application of this research to older persons?
- Innovativeness:*** Why is this research exciting or newsworthy?

The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile represents the best efforts of a broad array of long term care professionals and stakeholders from the public and private sectors to derive functional requirements and timelines for these requirements for EHR systems in nursing homes using the HL7 EHR-S Functional Model. The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile will be undergoing balloting by HL7 Electronic Health Record Technical Committee to become an industry standard. The LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile has been sent to the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT) to help inform their efforts as they specify certification criteria for nursing home EHR products and begin to certify nursing home EHRs as meeting these criteria. CCHIT is expected to begin certifying NH EHRs in 2009.

The development of the Functional Profile, the anticipated recognition by HL7 of the LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile as an industry standard, and the use of the LTC-NH EHR-S Functional Profile by CCHIT in specifying the certification criteria for NH EHRs

is expected to inform nursing home providers of the EHR functionality they could acquire, and will provide a roadmap for nursing home HIT vendors as to the type of functionality that certified products will be required to meet and when. Such information is expected to encourage and accelerate implementation of interoperable EHRs by nursing home providers. Use of interoperable EHRs is expected to support needed quality and continuity of care improvements, efficiency gains, and cost reductions.