

## News Release

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### **Final HHS Health IT Safety Plan issued**

*The Joint Commission to expand capacity to investigate Health IT-related events*

A plan to guide health information technology (IT) activities across the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to eliminate medical errors, protect patients, and improve the quality and efficiency of health care was issued today by HHS. The final [Health IT Patient Safety Action and Surveillance Plan](#) addresses the role of health IT within HHS' commitment to patient safety. The Plan builds on recommendations from the 2011 Institute of Medicine report, titled Health IT and Patient Safety: Building Safer Systems for Better Care, and from public comments.

“When implemented and used properly, health IT is an important tool in finding and avoiding medical errors and protecting patients,” said National Coordinator for Health IT Farzad Mostashari, M.D. “This Plan will help us make sure that these new technologies are used to make health care safer.”

The Plan, implemented by the Office of National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), outlines the responsibilities to be shared across HHS and details significant participation from the private sector. Through the Plan:

- ONC will make it easier for clinicians to report health IT-related incidents and hazards through the use of certified electronic health record technology (CEHRT).
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality will encourage reporting to Patient Safety Organizations and will update its standardized reporting forms to enable ambulatory reporting of health IT events.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will encourage the use of the standardized reporting forms in hospital incident reporting systems, and train surveyors to identify safe and unsafe practices associated with health IT.
- Working through a public-private process, ONC will develop priorities for improving the safety of health IT. ONC and CMS will consider adopting safety-related objectives, measures, and capabilities for CEHRTs through the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs and ONC's standards and certification criteria.

To accompany the Plan's surveillance of safety-related capabilities in CEHRT, ONC today issued guidance clarifying that ONC-Authorized Certification Bodies will be expected to verify whether safety-related capabilities work properly in live clinical settings in which they are implemented.

In addition to the Plan, today Dr. Mostashari announced ONC has contracted with The Joint Commission to better detect and proactively address potential health IT-related safety issues across a variety of health care settings. The Joint Commission will expand its capacity to investigate the role

of health IT as a contributing cause of adverse events and will identify high priority areas for expected types of health IT-related events.

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