

# Developing National eHealth Interoperability Standards for Ireland



**Health  
Information  
and Quality  
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis  
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

## Consultation Feedback Form

December 2011

Your views are very important to us. We would like to hear what you think about the document *Developing National eHealth Interoperability Standards for Ireland: A Consultation Document* and your thoughts on the areas of work we should prioritise. Your comments will be considered and will inform the future development of the technical standards for interoperability.

The consultation document contains two questions.

**The closing date for consultation is 1pm Friday 27 January 2012**

## About you

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I am responding :	as an individual	
	on behalf of an organisation	x

## Feedback questions

The document presents for public consultation recommendations and guiding principles for the development of technical standards. We would like to know your views on guiding principles and on areas which should be prioritised by the technical committee.

To facilitate your feedback we have two specific questions detailed below.

### Questions

**Question 1:** In the first instance, which area of work should be prioritised by the eHealth Standards Advisory Committee?

*Please comment*

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is playing an ever increasing role in medicine and the advantages of eHealth are becoming increasingly apparent. Notably patient records can be stored, retrieved and updated much more efficiently, important information can be processed from patient files in relation to particular diseases allowing for important audit, research and planning. EHealth also allows for more efficient transfer of patient information between healthcare settings enhancing patient safety and quality of care, by reducing repetition and errors in diagnostics and treatments.

In the absence of funding and consensus for a national system of electronic health records, the interoperability of ICT systems between healthcare settings is necessary to reap the benefits of eHealth of development in Ireland. The interoperability of ICT systems requires that

- the data structure and minimum dataset within the systems be standardised,
- that there is convergence of taxonomy and terminology and
- messaging standards for the exchange of data between systems.

Without the early adoption of interoperability standards, considerable wastage may occur as current ICT projects require upgrading or replacement. Equally, not all systems will need to be capable of interfacing with all other systems and complex “over-specification” will increase costs without benefit in (or perhaps to the detriment of) functionality.

The Irish Medical Organisation recommend that the eHealth Standards Advisory Committee prioritise the adoption of a messaging standard to be applied to appropriate information systems. It is likely that a meaningful standard for messaging will require some regularising of the minimum dataset to be used within these systems.

**Question 2:** Please provide us with any general comments you would like to make.

*Please comment*

The Guiding Principles for the development of interoperability standards must include reference to Patient Safety and Patient Confidentiality.

While the benefits of eHealth - in terms of efficiency and advancing medical practice to improve the delivery of healthcare – are unquestionable they can only be considered a benefit when patient safety can be assured. It will still be necessary to verify patient details as they pass from one health establishment to another

The use of ICT in healthcare raises important issues of privacy and confidentiality. The IMO is calling for the urgent publication of the Health Information Bill to clarify issues of confidentiality, access and security in relation to electronic health records and secondary use of data.

## Thank you for taking the time to give us your views on *Developing National eHealth Interoperability Standards for Ireland: A Consultation Document*

Please return your form to us either by email or post:



[ehealthconsultation@hiqa.ie](mailto:ehealthconsultation@hiqa.ie)



Health Information and Quality Authority  
National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare  
George's Court  
George's Lane  
Smithfield, Dublin 7



If you have any questions you can contact the consultation team by calling (01) 814 7436.

Please forward your submission by 1pm Friday 27 January 2012. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged by email. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt, please contact us directly to ensure your submission can be considered.

The Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Acts and the statutory Code of Practice regarding FOI. For that reason, it would be helpful if you could explain to us if you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.