

# THSA



TEXAS HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY

## STATE HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE PLANNING PROCESS

### SUMMARY

The Texas Health Services Authority (THSA) is developing health information exchange (HIE) strategic and operational plans for the State of Texas. The plans will be finalized by September 27, 2010.

### WHAT IS HIE?

The electronic movement of health-related information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards.

### WHY DOES THE STATE OF TEXAS NEED HIE STRATEGIC AND OPERATION PLANS?

In the short-term, completion of a statewide plan for HIE will allow the state to access \$27.8 million in implementation funding to support HIE activities at the state, regional and local level.

Additionally, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides incentives for eligible Medicaid and Medicare providers and hospitals to encourage adoption of electronic health records (EHRs). In order to fully qualify for these incentives, providers and hospitals must make “meaningful use” of the EHRs by exchanging clinical health data across secure networks.

Creation of a statewide plan for HIE will help to ensure Texas providers and hospitals are eligible to receive **billions** in meaningful use incentive payments over the next decade.

In the long-term, Texas has an opportunity to leverage technology to improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of the Texas health care sector while protecting individual privacy. Interconnecting clinical providers and patients through a secure, electronic system that ensures confidentiality through appropriate levels of patient consent will help to ensure providers have the right information at the right time. Access by authorized providers to past clinical information about patients will enable physicians and other clinicians to provide better care, reduce duplicative tests, and avoid adverse drug events, among other things. Providers will also have access to up-to-date clinical research and new clinical guidelines to use when making medical decisions. Ultimately, patients will receive higher quality care and have access to additional information so that they can better manage their personal health or health care.

## THSA HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

The THSA was created through House Bill 1066 in 2007 as a public private partnership, legal structured as a nonprofit corporation, to support the improvement of the Texas health care system by promoting and coordinating HIE and health information technology throughout the state. A 13-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the Texas Senate governs the THSA.

## BACKGROUND – STATE HIE PLANNING PROCESS

In March 2010, the HHSC received an award from the Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) for funding through the State HIE Cooperative Agreement Program. The purpose of this program, which was created by ARRA, is to fund state planning and implementation of electronic health information networks to support higher quality, safer, and more efficient health care. Texas' allotment through this program is \$28.8 million over the four years of the program. Of this allotment, Texas can use \$1 million to develop strategic and operational plans to guide the establishment and operation of these electronic health information networks. Texas is eligible to access the remaining \$27.8 million for implementation following the development and approval of the state's strategic and operational plans by ONC.

The HHSC is serving as the fiscal agent for this funding and the THSA, under contract with HHSC, is responsible for developing HIE strategic and operational plans for the State of Texas through an open and participatory state planning process. The THSA's planning process will include:

- an environmental scan to assess readiness for HIE implementation and electronic health record adoption;
- the development of state-level HIE policies, including privacy and consent policies, to be implemented as funding conditions;
- a well-defined vision with goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving HIE capacity and use;
- a legal framework for exchange among local, regional, and statewide HIE;
- an approach for coordinating with Medicaid, Medicare and other federally funded programs, including other ARRA programs;
- technical support for building and enhancing local and regional HIE capacity; and
- a communications strategy to ensure that the Texas health care community is informed of HIE activities across the state, such as the availability of tools to assist physicians and other health care providers with HIT adoption and HIE, and the process for receiving Medicaid electronic health record incentive payments.

Once complete, the strategic and operational plans will guide the implementation of HIE services in Texas.

**For more information, contact:**

Tony Gilman, CEO  
Texas Health Services Authority  
512.305.8453  
[tony.gilman@thsa.org](mailto:tony.gilman@thsa.org)