The Digital Bridge between Public Health and Healthcare

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Digital Bridge?
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is supporting an effort to implement electronic case reporting (eCR) for select notifiable conditions at several pilot sites. RWJF’s vision, shared by all public health agencies, health care delivery systems, and EHR vendors participating in the Digital Bridge, is that there will ultimately be bidirectional movement of data between the health care delivery system and public health. This will allow for surveillance of acute and chronic conditions, and it will bolster the coordinated effort to improve the health of populations. eCR is viewed as the first step toward fulfillment of this vision. The Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII) and Deloitte Consulting LLP Institute are responsible for running the Program Management office for the proof of concept effort through January 2018.

My organization is not involved but we want to have input. How can we provide feedback on the Digital Bridge effort?
The current effort is limited not to be exclusionary but to ensure that we can move swiftly enough to meet the Meaningful Use 3 deadline of Jan. 1, 2018. Experience shows that these types of efforts are most successful when clear and realistic milestones are established to keep key stakeholders engaged, committed and energized. However, there are several avenues for feedback. First, we are available by email at info@digitalbridge.us. Also, you can provide feedback through the designated representatives on the Digital Bridge Interim Governance Body and the workgroups. An improved website will be available at digitalbridge.us by late September 2016. Please check back for more details.

What other things can we do to help?
Socialize the effort beyond your immediate work organization and refer your peers to the digitalbridge.us website for more information.

Be excited!

What are the ultimate goals of the Digital Bridge? What do you mean by a bidirectional exchange?
We want to build a bidirectional health data exchange between public health and health care. This bidirectional health data exchange will allow health care data collected in the clinical setting to inform public health activities while lessening the burden of data entry on health care personnel. Also, public health will be able to request any additional information from health care personnel and send appropriate guidelines. Future connections for bidirectional data exchange will allow for collaborated management of chronic diseases and emerging health threats, in addition to reportable conditions. We can be proactive in identifying effective interventions to improve population health.
When will the workgroups launch?

The requirements workgroup will launch in September 2016—and only last a short time—followed shortly by the technical solution workgroup. The sustainability and legal workgroups will launch towards the end of the 2016 calendar year.