



Minutes
Health Information Technology Standards Advisory Committee
(HITSAC)

Thursday, November, 19, 2009

Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)
Commonwealth Enterprise Solutions Center
Chesterfield Conference Room
11751 Meadowville Lane, Chester, VA 23836

Attendance

Members present:

Dr. Marshall Ruffin, Chair
Daniel Barchi
Geoff Brown

Members absent:

John Quinn
Dr. Alistair Erskine

Others present:

Kim Barnes, Commonwealth of Virginia Coordinator of Office of Health IT

Call To Order

Chairman Ruffin called the meeting to order at approximately 10:36 a.m. in the Chesterfield Conference Room at the Commonwealth Enterprise Solutions Center (CESC) in Chester. Ms. Hoffman, at the request of Chairman Ruffin, called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum with three of five members of the committee present.

At the request of Chairman Ruffin, Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barchi, to approve the Oct. 22, 2009 minutes. The Committee approved the minutes by voice vote.

Chair's Report

Chairman Ruffin advised the Committee that the Health Information Technology Advisory Commission (HITAC) met on Nov. 9, 2009. Most of the members of HITAC were present at the meeting and aware of the content and Chairman Ruffin felt a formal briefing for HITAC was not necessary. Ms. Barnes and Mr. Barchi both reported the meeting was rather brief. Ms. Barnes advised that David Dietrich, from the Virginia Northern Company, suggested HITAC gather information from a number of other states. Mr. Dietrich offered to provide state contact information. Ms. Barnes believed HITAC would want to participate in this learning process.

Ms. Barnes advised that General Electric thought that Maryland had one of the best plans for implementation of a health information exchange (HIE). Further, other states such as Kentucky have experienced problems in issuing a request for a proposal (RFP) dealing specifically with a master patient index (MPI). Chairman Ruffin agreed that Kentucky's method may cause issues if it is too prescriptive.

Chairman Ruffin suggested that Ms. Barnes contact the National Governor's Association (NGA) as he believes they have collected information on all fifty states. Dr. Ruffin provided the following NGA contact names to Ms. Barnes: Kathleen Nolan, Michelle Flanagan and Cara Campbell.

The Committee also discussed the potential of having the next HITAC meeting at the CESC so that HITAC members can attend and hold a concurrent public meeting. Ms. Hoffman will attempt to secure space at CESC for the joint meeting.

Ms. Hoffman advised the Committee that staff has been unable to get detailed information from Indiana concerning their operational HIE. However, Indiana has issued a press release indicating the state is partnering with other entities to submit their grant application to the federal Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). Chairman Ruffin advised it may be more fruitful to contact the NGA as it will be difficult to contact anyone substantive in Indiana.

Ms. Barnes advised the Committee that the state is prepared to go forward with the structure from the current Governor's Executive Order with the hope that the structure will continue with the change of administration. Ms. Barnes indicated she will ask Michael Matthews, CEO of Med Virginia who is a member of the NHIN Board to update the Commission on the status of the NHIN.

Ms. Hoffman summarized her understanding of the HIE planning project stating a project manager will oversee five workgroups each responsible for one of the five domains outlined by ONC in the funding proposal. Ms. Barnes added that the workgroups will present their deliverables to HITAC for review. Ms. Barnes expressed her belief that HITAC will provide the work for the technical domain. Ms. Barnes will be contracting a project management professional (PMP) to assist the Office of Health IT in running the project.

The Committee also discussed having Aneesh Chopra, Chief Technology Officer for the federal government dial into the Dec. 17th HITAC meeting to present federal updates and answer questions.

Chairman Ruffin informed the Committee he recently took part in a discussion with ONC and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). He advised that the discussion centered on a section of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) for incentive payments. No incentive payments would be made to hospital based

physicians. This could have serious consequences for hospitals in Virginia. Dr. Ruffin advised it appears that Congress did not want to use money for physicians who use hospital IT resources. The concern raised is that the determination is based on site of service and without regard to any employment or billing arrangement. If interpreted broadly, no physician working at a hospital based clinic may be eligible which could represent one third of physicians in the nation. Mr. Barchi believed the definition would hopefully not include clinics that are owned by hospitals. Chairman Ruffin advised the initial proposed regulations will be issued in December and then there will be a sixty day period for public comment. The Committee agreed the issue may pose an obstacle or issue and will follow up on the matter as the regulations are released.

Chairman Ruffin also informed the Committee he received a call from Committee member Mr. Quinn concerning trends at the federal level about health IT standards. There is a concern that there may be a move away from Health Level 7 (HL7) standards for interoperability. HITSAC may need to understand the alternatives if HL7 does not form the basis of interoperability standards. HITSAC needs to gain an understanding of the possible alternatives, their impact on the current situation and be able to express those concerns to the federal implementation group headed by Aneesh Chopra. Mr. Brown remarked that public comment would be overwhelmingly against adopting something other than HL7 within the current timeline for HIE implementation by 2015.

Review Draft COV-HIE Technical Infrastructure Document

Ms. Hoffman presented changes to the COV-HIE Technical Infrastructure document that the Committee amended at its previous meetings. The updated document is located here: http://www.vita.virginia.gov/uploadedFiles/ITIB/Meetings/2009/Nov_19_2009/COV_HIE_technical_infrastructure_111909.pdf.

Ms. Hoffman recommended the Committee finalize the document. Ms. Hoffman advised the background and recommendations within the document have been transferred to a new report being prepared for agency, public and ultimately ITIB review. The recommendations for governance were not carried over and should be presented separately by HITSAC to HITAC for review.

In response to Chairman Ruffin's question, Ms. Barnes foresees HITSAC becoming the technical infrastructure committee for HITAC as a logical step. Further, Ms. Barnes believed the governance group of HITAC will really be the entire commission with a subgroup providing recommendations. HITAC will also have communications, metrics, legal and policy, and finance workgroups. Ms. Barnes advised that the next full meeting of HITAC on Dec. 17th will likely address the overall makeup of the workgroups and who will lead each one.

Chairman Ruffin also discussed the changes underway at the federal level, specifically, Mr. Chopra chairing the implementation workgroup for the Health IT Standards Committee (HITSC). Mr. Chopra's implementation committee is discussing a new information model. There is a concern that ONC is continuing the evolution of HL7 through the work of HITSP while the new implementation workgroup may be discussing a new model. This is the key ingredient HITSAC needs to learn more about. Ms. Barnes, at the request of Mr. Chopra will be having a conference call on Tuesday Nov. 24th. Ms. Barnes will inquire further about potential changes at the federal level.

Review Draft COV-HIE Architecture Report

Ms. Hoffman reviewed a new report which presents the HITSAC recommendations as requirements to be reviewed and subsequently adopted by the Information Technology Investment Board (ITIB) and followed by executive branch state agencies. The draft report is located here:

http://www.vita.virginia.gov/uploadedFiles/ITIB/Meetings/2009/Nov_19_2009/Draft_COV_HIE_Architecture_Report_111909.pdf.

In the initial background section, Chairman Ruffin suggested including all five of HITSAC members' names.

In response to Mr. Barchi's question concerning all fifty states developing their own HIEs rather than following the national effort of the NHIN, Chairman Ruffin expressed his sense that many such efforts have been done so there is a historical precedent. Further, many states had been moving forward, mostly with private efforts rather than state led efforts, with their own HIEs and this federalized version allows those efforts to continue.

Chairman Ruffin believed HITSAC should initiate contacts with HITSC and Health Information Technology Policy Committee (HITPC) as they are continuing the work and advising ONC at this time.

The Committee discussed logistics with presenting this report to the ITIB once finalized and will ask Bert Reese, liaison between HITSAC and ITIB, to review before the recommendations are presented to the ITIB.

Chairman Ruffin advised that the requirements may be broader than funding opportunity for the COV-HIE. The requirements may address new processes for ensuring health agency interoperability. If the HIE is a process, rather than a thing, other processes that will need to integrate with the COV-HIE, such as other state agencies and private entities, will need to begin to ensure their processes are interoperable with the COV-HIE. Chairman Ruffin expressed his belief that entities would need to show they are in compliance with the forthcoming standards before being able to fully integrate and connect to the COV-HIE. The interoperability of messaging data defines the COV-HIE as a "process". The ONC funding opportunity defines the COV-HIE as a "thing".

Ms. Barnes advised that this report recommends standards for ITIB adoption and state agency adherence. The HIE plan, that will be created in 2010, will define the detailed COV-HIE technical infrastructure. The COV-HIE plan does not require ITIB approval.

Chairman Ruffin recessed the Committee at 12:10 p.m.

Chairman Ruffin reconvened the meeting at approximately 1:15 p.m.

The Committee continued its discussion of the draft COV-HIE Architecture Report. Ms. Hoffman pointed out that any agency wishing to deviate from the approved standards would need to seek and receive an exception from George Coulter, the Commonwealth of Virginia Chief Information Officer. Mr. Coulter will seek guidance from HITSAC on whether to grant the exception or not. Chairman Ruffin inquired as to whether the document should explicitly state HITSAC as the group to consider an exception request and make recommendations. Ms. Hoffman agreed to review the exception process and modify the report accordingly.

The Committee discussed issues with whether the state or a state designated entity would actually develop and manage the COV-HIE. The Committee discussed the audience for the report and determined to remove private organizations from the report. The Committee also recommended changes to reflect that HITSAC will define the technical infrastructure for the COV-HIE.

In response to Ms. Hoffman's question, the Committee agreed that when defining the individual requirements, the document should continue to include the rationale for the requirement.

The Committee discussed whether a definition for technical infrastructure was truly needed in the document. The Committee agreed that since HITSAC would continue to define the exact technical infrastructure requirements, a definition is not needed at this time.

When discussing HITSAC interoperability specification requirements, Ms. Barnes advised of her belief that the document cannot require all Commonwealth HIEs to comply with HITSP Interoperability Specifications and HITSP Capabilities. Mr. Barchi agreed the state cannot force private HIEs to comply, but can require compliance if the entity would like to connect to the COV-HIE and then the NHIN. Chairman Ruffin suggested amendments to reflect that all Commonwealth HIEs that exchange data in electronic form with state agencies shall comply.

In response to Chairman Ruffin's question concerning a potential conflict with HITSP and Commonwealth of Virginia security and privacy concerns, the Committee agreed to currently state that they will comply with both because it would be impossible to determine if there would be future conflicts. Ms. Barnes advised, based upon past efforts, that she did not believe there would be serious conflicts arising in the future.

The Committee, at Ms. Barnes suggestion, agreed to link to the HITSP definition of terms for a glossary. Further, the Committee believed interoperability could possibly be further defined after determining federal and state definitions.

In response to Chairman Ruffin's question, Ms. Hoffman agreed that the document can link to HITSP Interoperability Specifications but that currently, HITSP has not itself concluded the overall mapping of Capabilities to Transactions and Components.

Chairman Ruffin offered that it may be helpful to have an additional appendix pointing to the individual messaging transactions and components. Ms. Hoffman advised she can research what links would be available to provide greater information to Components and Transactions necessary for each Capability.

The Committee discussed the process of posting the report for on-line review and comment. The report must be available for public comment for thirty days. Further, state agencies will be notified directly and have the same opportunity to provide feedback. HITSAC will address any comments received. HITSAC would like to present the final report to the ITIB in Jan. 2010.

The Committee also discussed exchanges of information between private laboratories and hospitals and state agencies such as the Department of Health.

Administrative Items

Ms. Hoffman advised the Committee members may need to consider what other resources the Committee may need going forward to develop plans for technical infrastructure. This would likely require more than Ms. Hoffman working part time and they may need a technical person. Whether the state hires or utilizes state personnel may very well depend upon whether the state heads the COV-HIE effort or uses a state designated entity. VITA does not likely have the required expertise to provide the support staff for developing the technical architecture. Ms. Barnes did advise the funding for an architect could come from the federal funding opportunity. This person could also potentially manage the state designated entity if that is the model selected for the future.

At present, HITSAC needs to be focused on the HIE planning to be completed between Jan. and Aug. 2010. Ms. Barnes advised she may be able to supply additional outside support staff from the Office of Health IT funding. Chairman Ruffin also offered that other organizations such as UVA and VCU may be willing to offer technical support staff for an in-kind contribution.

The Committee discussed logistics of hosting the next meeting of HITSAC simultaneous with HITAC at the Chester location.

Other Business

Chairman Ruffin advised there was no other business for the Committee.

Public Comment

Chairman Ruffin called for any public comment and there was none.

Adjourn

Chairman Ruffin asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown, motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Barchi. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:55 p.m.