

# INTEROPERABILITY IN HEALTHCARE

## OBSTACLES

## SOLUTIONS

## ITS FUTURE



Healthcare institutions & EHR vendors generally acknowledge the need for interoperability in the industry. While the initiative to push interoperability across healthcare systems began more than a decade ago, obstacles to its full realization still remain.

This infographic will explore the value of interoperability in healthcare, the roadblocks to its adoption and important initiatives to overcome challenges.

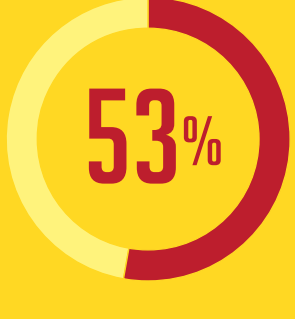
## A LOOK AT INTEROPERABILITY TODAY<sup>[1-4]</sup>

The goal of interoperability in healthcare is simple - to establish an ecosystem that enables the fast and secure transfer of patient information between different EHR vendors. It aims to connect pharmacies, laboratories, clinics, hospitals and patients for the seamless exchange of medical data.

### Interoperability in healthcare today



82% of hospitals electronically exchanged information with outside entities in 2015



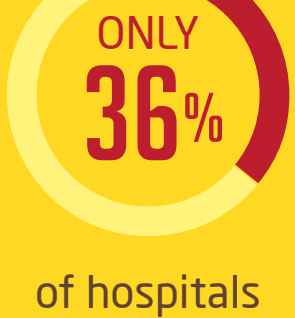
53% of hospitals reported that their EHR provider used patient information electronically received from other providers



89% of providers agree that interoperability improves the quality of care received by patients

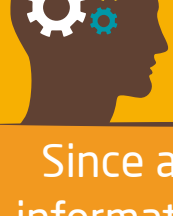


80% of providers reported that interoperability benefits their efficiency



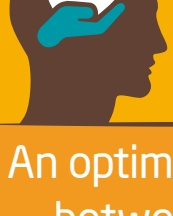
ONLY 36% of hospitals reported that their provider rarely or never uses external data

### All in all, there are three main benefits of interoperability



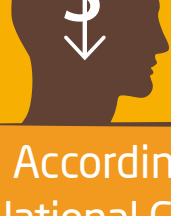
#### INCREASE IN EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Since access to medical information is streamlined through interoperability, employee discharge times are greatly reduced.



#### BETTER CARE AND SECURITY FOR PATIENTS

An optimized interoperability between different EHR providers prevents human error, thus, improving the care & security of patients.



#### LOWER COSTS IN HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

According to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT, the shift toward interoperability can save over \$30 billion a year from non-integrated healthcare systems.

## THE OBSTACLES THAT HINDER INTEROPERABILITY<sup>[5-7]</sup>

Understanding the obstacles to interoperability's adoption in healthcare is the key to accelerating the slow process. Below are some of the identified technical, financial and procedural challenges that EHR providers and healthcare organizations need to navigate.

### INCOMPATIBILITY WITH RECEIVING PARTNER'S EHR SYSTEM

Communication issues between two different EHR systems create the most barriers to interoperability. Statistics show that more than half of providers report that their exchange partners lack the EHR system or the system's capability to receive data.

### LACK OF STANDARDIZED BUSINESS MODEL

According to director of the Office for Standards and Technology for the Office of the National Coordinator in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "There need to be business agreements in place &, in many cases, a business model around exchanging information that impacts the delivery of care - simply putting the technology in people's hands isn't enough."

### RISE OF EXISTING EMRS

Rise of Existing EMRs - The proliferation of incompatible, competing electronic medical records is another major obstacle to the full realization of interoperability.



### INADEQUATE STAFF TRAINING

Although EHR vendors offer, these are barely enough to allow the effective utilization of a complex, interoperable system. According to an EHR Physician Satisfaction Survey, 72% of physicians felt that they needed to train more on their technical competencies.



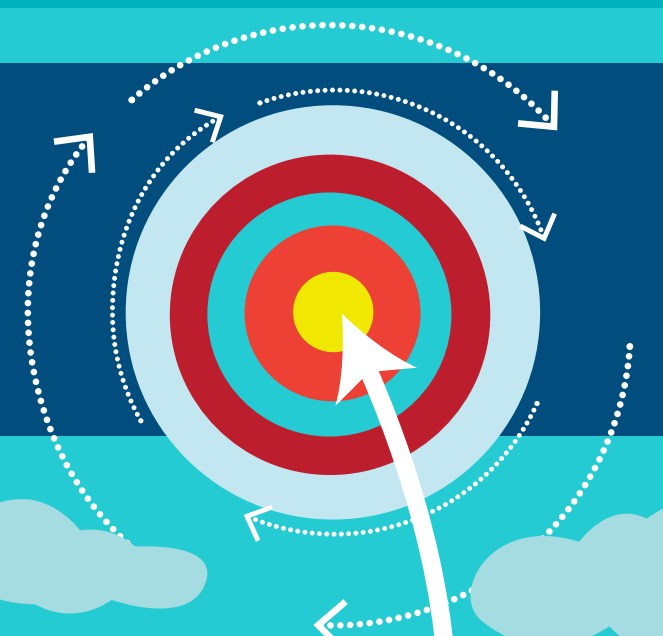
### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The costs of purchasing and maintaining an EHR system are two of the main reasons why practitioners hesitate to adopt interoperability. Since clinicians and physicians still need to make money, they're still concerned about whether or not there will be a positive ROI to acquiring a new EHR system.



## THE STRIDES OF INTEROPERABILITY<sup>[8-10]</sup>

Here are some of the technologies being used and steps being taken that advance interoperability in healthcare:



### FHIR

The Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources API is geared toward the rapid development of interoperable EHR systems and other apps. The platform is royalty-free - one of the reasons why it is effective in encouraging the participation of EHR vendors.

### VALUE-BASED PAYMENT AND DELIVERY REFORMS

To take advantage of alternative payment models that value the quality of care, EHR providers need an interoperable system more than ever.



### MACRA DEFINES INTEROPERABILITY

MACRA defines interoperability as the ability of two or more healthcare technologies to securely exchange & use medical information. These two technologies must abide by guidelines that preserve the quality of patient care.



### COMMITMENT TO THE EHR DEVELOPER CODE OF CONDUCT

Under this code, EHR vendors are committed to build around infrastructures that support interoperability. Absolutely no data-blocking features should be written for EHR systems.



### FOCUSED TRAINING ON CERTAIN STAFF

To provide training more effectively, organizations designate the task of learning the system to only one or two staff members.



### PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HEALTH PLAN ORGANIZATIONS & DATA EXCHANGES

Health data initiatives are currently taking steps toward a more connected health IT industry. One example is the efforts of the LA Care Health Plan, with the help of Safety Net Connect, in connecting 21 hospitals into their health information exchange.



Organizations continue to pave the way for interoperability one step at a time. There are still plenty of challenges ahead that slow its adoption, but with the collective efforts of EHR providers, hospitals, and health IT organizations, the healthcare industry is surely headed to a more connected future.



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