eHI Policy Steering Committee & ONC Meeting
Wednesday, April 14, 2021

eHI's Policy Steering Committee met with representatives from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology on Tuesday, April 14th. The goal of this meeting was to engage ONC in an interactive discussion around eHI's five policy principles and identify specific areas for follow up.

Virtual Care Delivery
Summary: No questions were asked under this priority, but eHI informed ONC of ongoing work with other digital health associations on identifying Medicare program integrity recommendations related to telehealth reimbursement*.*

Health Equity
Summary: ONC is in the beginning stages of thinking about their SDOH work and it is the perfect time for organizations to weigh in on areas where we think ONC should be active. The CDC is also working in this area, specifically to look at SDOH data in health management. The ONC also has a project to look at SDOH data in referral management and the funding opportunity for this is currently open – it will be a two-year activity for about $1 million. eHI is interested in following up on the issue of harnessing community resources and referral networks to address SDOH.

Interoperability & Information Exchange
Summary: The patient matching report that is due to Congress is currently under final review with Dr. Tripathi. While ONC hasn't learned of *new* things during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has shone a light on existing issues – especially with regards to immunization registries and other pandemic-related activities. It has also highlighted gaps that exist within an organization and the activities that go on, which are a combination of algorithm-based as well as human-based. As we see interoperability increase, we will likely see more patient matching issues arise. eHI is supportive of removing the appropriations ban on promulgation of unique patient identifier standards.

TEFCA is not dead – ONC is deep in the weeds on TEFCA now. Dr. Tripathi is currently working getting more familiarized with the discussion and developing a strategy in relation to TEFCA. ONC cannot provide an answer on timelines at this time.

With regards to the information blocking rule, if eHI members have questions on any outstanding items, can submit questions and feedback directly to ONC via their website. ONC staff is also willing to collaborate with eHI on educational events for members to ask questions directly.

ONC can't speak to the status of the OIG's information blocking enforcement regulation at this time.

ONC staff did not have too many comments on the future of its Certification Program but did state the purpose of the Certification Program is to support those who participate in federal programs, like Medicare and Medicaid. They will continue to be responsive to the needs of those actors, as well as federal agencies. In relation to the Certification Program's consideration of patient safety, ONC is

interested in safety implications of health IT. Though a previously proposed safety program was not authorized by Congress, ONC is dedicated to ensuring patient safety of health IT.

Privacy
Summary: ONC would like to keep in contact with eHI on our privacy work. While ONC's does not play a major role in privacy policy, they acknowledge that many of their regulations are aimed at "freeing" data and with that comes privacy implications.

Public Health
Summary: There has been and will continue to be investment in public health system modernization due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ONC would like to ensure the investments are sustainable for the future. While the rapid onslaught of the pandemic did not allow for adequate time to make changes to the infrastructure, there is likely to be sustained attention to public health as a result of the pandemic.