



# North Dakota Health Information Technology

*Quality Healthcare for all North Dakotans - Anywhere, Anytime*

## Governance Domain Team

**WORKING DRAFT DOCUMENT v2**

August 28, 2010

Health Information Exchange Strategic and Operational Plan  
Governance Domain Team  
**WORKING DRAFT**

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## 1. Vision

A strong vision statement is the key to a successful Strategic Plan. It sets the direction for the organization and inspires others to want to help your organization achieve a desired future state. A vision statement provides inspiration and becomes the foundation on which the organizations business strategy is built. A strong vision statement has five key attributes:

1. Clear - easy to understand
2. Compelling - enlists others in helping you
3. Challenging - difficult but achievable
4. Consistent - transcends time and can serve as guideposts for many years
5. Charter - defines the purpose for being in existence

The vision statement will describe the desired future state to which your organization aspires. While organizations rarely attain their true vision, it is something that everyone associated with the organization can understand and hope to achieve. It serves as guide and is used to enlist stakeholders in the journey to the desired future state.

The North Dakota Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) adopted their original vision in 2006. They reviewed and updated the vision in March 2010. The vision statement was tested with stakeholders across the state as a part of the Environmental Scan process during early April 2010. Over 250 stakeholders were asked about the vision statement and they were nearly unanimous in their support. The statement was reviewed again by HITAC during the May review of the Environmental Scan report and consensus was achieved.

North Dakota Health Information Exchange Vision Statement  
*Quality healthcare for all North Dakotans - Anywhere, Anytime.*

## 2. Mission

The mission statement defines the fundamental purpose of the organization and describes what the organization does to achieve its vision. It outlines the basic purpose and process for getting the organization to the desired level of performance that is described in the vision statement.

The mission statement has five key attributes.

1. Connects with the Vision - describes the path the organization will take to reach its vision
2. Sets the Purpose - defines the fundamental purpose of the organization
3. Establishes the Framework - sets the parameters for work activities
4. Describes the Primary Services - describes the basic services offered by the organization
5. Defines the customer - tells who the services are designed to benefit

The North Dakota Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) adopted their original mission in 2008. They reviewed and updated the mission in March 2010. At the end of the workshop, they settled on a preliminary statement. The statement was approved by HITAC in March 2010.

### North Dakota Health Information Exchange Mission Statement

*Advance the adoption and use of technology to exchange health information and improve healthcare quality, patient safety and overall efficiency of healthcare and public health services in North Dakota.*

### 3. Principles

Principles describe the foundational beliefs that are shared among the stakeholders of an organization. They represent a set of values that establish an obligation for the organization to behave or act in a certain way. Principles are voluntary and without external coercion and describe the organizations desired culture and priorities.

The North Dakota Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) considered adopting a set of principles as the result of the Environmental Scan process. These principles have been approved by the Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) for inclusion in the Strategic and Operational HIE plan. After consideration, modifications will be made to reflect the thinking of the Team.

#### North Dakota Health Information Exchange Proposed Principles

1. Operate with Transparency and Openness: All HIE Governance activities should meet the highest standards of an open and transparent organization that strives to keep consumers and stakeholder informed.
2. Build Stakeholder Trust: Create and foster trust by and between healthcare stakeholders to further the willingness to exchange healthcare information and data.
3. Maintain Neutrality: Ensure the statewide HIE remains neutral in the competitive marketplace in North Dakota and delivers a high quality exchange service that meets the needs of all stakeholders without giving an advantage to any particular stakeholder(s).
4. Stakeholder Investment: All stakeholders should contribute financially to the formation and ongoing operation of the statewide HIE.
5. Offer Personal Choice: The patient is at the center of the healthcare universe and as such is entitled to have their electronic health records available to assist in the continuity of care.
6. Foster a Culture of Innovation: The HIE should take advantage of the creative nature of the market in North Dakota and develop an organizational culture that taps into and benefits from the innovative ideas of its citizens.
7. Engage Stakeholders: Efforts must create value for all participants-statewide, regionally, and for each stakeholder interest. To promote acceptance and adoption, it is important to communicate with and educate all participants early and often regarding the value and benefits of HIE.
8. Promote Statewide HIE solutions: Every region of North Dakota is different and should be given the flexibility and standards to fit into the emerging HIE infrastructure in the way that is appropriate to service patients and protect patient health data.
9. Leverage Existing HIT Initiatives and Resources: A coordinated effort, leveraging existing initiatives and resources, provides the greatest potential for improving HIT adoption rates and HIE success.
10. Be inclusive: Sensitivity to the culturally diverse population should be considered as part of the design, development, and implementation of all HIE activities.
11. Focus on the primary purpose: HIT / HIE is only one tool used to accomplish the broader goal for of improved healthcare outcomes North Dakotans. Always remember it's about the patient and not the technology.

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12. Build a Learning Health system: As defined by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC), a Learning Health system is designed to generate and apply the best evidence for the collaborative care choices of each patient and provider; to drive the process of new discovery as a natural outgrowth of patient care; and to ensure innovation, quality, safety, and value in health care

#### 4. Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC)

In 2006 a North Dakota Health Summit was convened by Senator Kent Conrad to discuss the status of Health Information Technology in North Dakota. A good cross section of healthcare stakeholders attended and they formed a Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) to help plan the future for the state. The University of North Dakota Center for Rural Health offered to act as the facilitator for the committee.

The 2007 North Dakota legislature codified the HIT Steering Committee as the entity to oversee and coordinate Health Information Technology and Exchange activities in the state. The Governor appointed members of the HIT Advisory Committee (HITAC) and the initial governance group was organized. However, no funds were appropriated so activities were supported by HRSA funds from the Center for Rural Health, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Dakota and in-kind contributions by the member organizations of HITAC.

In 2008, the Center for Rural Health conducted the initial environmental scan of the state regarding the adoption of electronic medical records by all types of stakeholders. In addition, the North Dakota Health Care Review, the state's QIO, surveyed private physicians and clinics regarding the same topic.

In 2009, HITAC approached the legislature for funding. They were successful in getting Senate Bill 2332 approved that provided funding to establish the State HIT office, hire a state HIT Director, create a low interest loan program to help entities acquire EMR technology and reauthorize the HITAC Committee. During 2009, HITAC hired a HIT Director, Sheldon Wolf, applied for ONC Cooperative Agreement funding, and issued an RFP for consulting supporting to develop the state's Strategic and Operational Plan (SOP).

In February, HITAC finalized the selection process for hiring a consultant to assist with the SOP work. In March, 2010, the state was notified they were awarded a grant from ONC for \$5,344,000. In April, HITAC convened the first meeting of the SOP process and has been working diligently since to complete the plan. In June, HITAC appointed a Governance Domain Team to assist with the development of the SOP. The Team held meetings in June, July and August to discuss and create the Governance strategy for the state. In July, ONC issued additional requirements for the governance section of the SOP.

The charter for the Domain Team is where expectations are defined, roles and responsibilities are determined, decision-making is agreed upon, and accountability is identified for the statewide HIE. Good governance supports the vision and mission of the statewide HIE by making sure that the interests of all stakeholders are represented in the key policy and strategic decision making of the organization. The best governance also provides the overarching framework for operational considerations and supports the management and staff by defining clear objectives and parameters for the governing body. It is anticipated HITAC will continue to use the Governance Domain Team to assist them as they move forward with the implementation of the SOP.

## 5. Governance Health Information Exchange Strategies

The Governance Domain Team identified the following strategies for constructing and operating the Health Information Exchange.

### 5.1 Board Structure

The Governance Domain Team recommends that the Health Information technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) continue to operate as the Board of Directors during the construction and early operations of the Health Information Exchange. The following strategies were established to accomplish this work:

- Create an Executive Committee of the HITAC Board consisting of seven (7) members to perform the tactical management of construction and ongoing operations
- Create the position of Chairperson of the HITAC Board
- Create four (4) additional Domain Teams to assist with the implementation process including:
  - Change Management Education
  - Communications
  - Consumer and provider adoption
  - Clinical
- Analyze the conversion of HITAC to a 501 (C) (3) within the first three (3) years of full operations

### 5.2 501 (C) (3) By-Laws Development

For operational guidance for the North Dakota Health Information Exchange when the conversion to a 501 (C) (3) is functional, HITAC will create a set of by-laws and operating policies to govern their activities including:

- Election of officers
- Terms of officers
- Number and type of standing committees and/or Domain Teams to provide guidance
- 

### 5.3 Oversight of State HIT Director / Department

HITAC needs to manage the work of the state office on Health Information Technology and the state HIT Director. In order to establish policies and procedures for accomplishing this work, HITAC will employ the following strategies:

- Establish a formal reporting structure to the Executive Committee when created
- Create a policy manual outlining the work responsibilities of the HIT Director, the annual planning process used by HITAC to set annual goals and objectives for the Director, and an annual performance appraisal process
- Appoint a subcommittee of HITAC to complete an initial set of recommendations

### 5.4 Engage Consumers in the HIE Creation Process

The following strategies for engaging consumers in the HIE creation process will be employed:

- Coordinate with various consumer groups (AARP, Chambers of Commerce Health Care Committee, Faith-based groups, etc.) for input and involvement
- Leverage the current consumer outreach programs and processes already in place by the major healthcare facilities across the state



- Appoint a consumer advisory task force

## 5.5 Long-term Commitment

Exchanging health information is a process that can take time to get up and running. From the point in time that a state decides HIE is of value and wishes to exchange information across the state, it can easily take up to three years before any meaningful quantity and quality of data can be exchanged. Identifying the best information to exchange, getting stakeholders to commit to exchanging information, and building an operational exchange takes time and patience. Of course, during this lengthy process stakeholders it is important for HITAC to maintain its connection to stakeholders and keep them engaged in the process. The following strategies for ensuring stakeholders are committed for the length of the process are:

- Secure long-term commitments for key stakeholders at the beginning of the HIE process
- Continuously link HIE activities to the value proposition for each stakeholder
- Establish clear and measurable timeframes for HIE construction and operations and adhere to these timelines
- Create a strong project management plan and authorize the state HIT Director to closely manage the project

## 5.6 Trust

The Environmental Scan identified several trust issues across North Dakota. The following strategies will be employed to address these six areas of trust.

### 5.6.1 Competitive Trust

The issue is how the HIE might change or alter the competitive landscape in North Dakota. The following strategies for building trust between competitors in the HIE will be employed:

- Maintain neutrality in all activities
- Consistent and frequent communications and education about the process
- Representation of the key stakeholders in the Domain Team workgroups
- Be inclusive with all stakeholder groups
- Use Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from all stakeholder groups on a rotating basis

### 5.6.2 Consumer Trust

Consumers have concerns, some real and some imagined, about HIE. The following strategies for building trust with consumers in the HIE will be employed:

- Consumer education
- Adherence to privacy and security policies
- Consistent and frequent communications and education about the process
- Inclusion of additional consumer groups in the construction process (See Section 5.4 above)
- Develop a clear process for accountability to stakeholders

### 5.6.3 Legislative Trust

It is likely the legislature will be asked to provide some level of financial support to the HIE effort. The following strategies for building trust with the legislature will be employed:

- Legislative education on the HIE process and progress
- Open and transparent reporting on activities
- Consistent and frequent communications and education about the process
- Establish a strong working relationship with various legislative committees that oversee and fund HIE operations
- Enlist consumers in building legislative support for the statewide HIE
- Engage statewide association in building legislative support for the statewide HIE

### 5.6.4 Generational Trust

Technology is generally more difficult for older Americans to trust than for younger generations. The following strategies for building trust between different generations using HIE services will be employed:

- Provide additional support and education for older consumers
- Consistent and frequent communications and education about the process
- Link to the consumer groups described above for better understanding of the value of the HIE
- Present educational seminars to senior groups where they meet regularly (i. e. County Aging Services, AARP, Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, etc.)

### 5.6.5 Rural Trust

North Dakota has a trust issue between the rural areas and the larger urban areas. The following strategies for building trust between urban and rural consumers of HIE services will be employed:

- Create policies that provide equitable HIE services to all regions in North Dakota
- Use tele-health when available to better connect rural patients to the larger urban systems
- Leverage the large hospital systems current connections to the rural community to educate and treat patients
- Consistent and frequent communications and education about the process

### 5.6.6 National Trust

The federal government is playing a much more active role in defining healthcare in America today. The following strategies for building trust with Federal Agencies will be employed:

- Adopt and adhere to the Data Use Reciprocal Support Agreement (DURSA)
- Create a simple form for North Dakota stakeholders to use that binds them under the state DURSA agreement
- Identify and adopt standard Business Associate Agreements for use in North Dakota
- Identify and adopt standard Data Sharing Agreements for use in North Dakota