Digital Bridge

Executive Summary

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Problem Statement

To fulfill their essential service of surveillance, public health agencies rely on providers to report critical health data (e.g., cases of infectious diseases, immunization details, etc.) to understand the state of population health and drive decisions on interventions. Current approaches for public health reporting do not take full advantage of EHRs and too often rely on manual tasks that discourage providers from reporting. In addition, complex public health reporting criteria vary by jurisdiction and disease condition, which can be overwhelming and exhausting to health care providers. As a result, incidents of public health significance go unreported, health care providers become unmotivated to connect with public health, and opportunities for public health to efficiently transmit useful information back to providers are missed.

Vision

A first of its kind initiative, Digital Bridge creates a forum for key decision makers in health care, public health and health information technology (IT) to collaborate on ideas and solutions for a nationally consistent and sustainable approach to using electronic health data. A unique characteristic of Digital Bridge is its commitment to promoting bidirectional, or two-way, information exchange between health care and public health, ensuring that the needs of each stakeholder group are met and that their perspectives are included.

Value Proposition

Digital Bridge promotes the use of national health IT infrastructure to alleviate the administrative burden and costs of outdated, siloed data exchange practices. It allows public health to speak with one voice by encouraging collaboration across all jurisdictions. By convening health care providers and industry partners, Digital Bridge provides an opportunity for them to be part of the conversation and solution to effective data exchange.

Goals

Below are high-level goals for Digital Bridge:

- Ease the burden and costs for all stakeholder groups through a unified approach to information exchange.
- Advance greater standards-based information exchange across public health and health care.
- Lay the foundation for greater bidirectional exchange of data so that clinicians can be more informed about population health, environmental risks and outbreaks.

This effort demonstrates that cross-sector information exchange can be achieved within the constraints of current health regulations, policies and business drivers, without new or modified laws and regulations. It shows that health care experts, industry partners and public health professionals can collaborate within a disciplined governance framework—designed for agile and quick decision making—and achieve tangible improvements to information sharing that foster a culture of health. As its first project, Digital Bridge has designed a nationally scalable, multi-jurisdictional approach to electronic case reporting (eCR). For more information on Digital Bridge, visit **www.digitalbridge.us**.