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About ABILITY

ABILITY works to save lives by facilitating information exchange and knowledge-sharing among every participant within the healthcare spectrum – hospitals, physician practices, home care providers, DMEs, and private and government payers – as well as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). In use for more than a decade in more than 3,000 hospitals across the country, ABILITY's network supports healthcare decision makers in their quest to promote care coordination and collaboration, reduce record fragmentation, participate in new and emerging care models, and access the Direct Project network and state and community-based Health Information Exchanges (HIEs). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

CMIO highlights ABILITY Network as Minnesota HISP

November 23, 2011 – Outlining the Direct Project's achievements and explaining their role in the Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN), CMIO featured ABILITY Network.

"Minneapolis-based ABILITY Network serves as a health information services provider (HISP) which connects HCMC with the MDH. In its role as a HISP (because not all vendors in the Direct Project are designed to deliver HISP capabilities), ABILITY expands the pilot to additional providers as well as some outside of Minnesota, including the Oklahoma Department of Health."

In outlining the formation and participation in The Direct Project, CMIO said the following:

- Based on recommendations from the NwHIN Work Group, the Direct project was launched in March 2010 by the Office of National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) for a secure, scalable and standards-based method of sending authenticated, encrypted health information to known and trusted recipients over the internet.
- Jitin Asnaani, MBA, the coordinator of standards and Interoperability Framework with ONC, says the Direct project is "starting to see a number of pilots not only being demonstrated, but also becoming operational as they expand beyond their current geographies."
- With more than 200 active participants from more than 50 organizations, the Direct project has evolved into a community where participants share challenges and lessons learned.
- Direct focuses on the technical standards needed to push content from a sender to a recipient in a secure message. For example, a primary care physician (pCp) referring a patient to a specialist can use Direct messaging to provide a clinical summary to the specialist and receive a summary of the consultation.
- ONC put together other pieces to catalyze information exchange, says Douglas Fridsma, MD, PhD, director at the Office of Interoperability & standards at ONC. "The Direct project is the transport mechanism. Direct is about the transportation elements, and using standardized vocabularies to exchange data," he says.
- Pilots are underway in Connecticut, Texas, Missouri, California, Minnesota, Oregon and New York. several of the initiatives' executives spoke with CMIO to discuss their Direct project work.

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