

Direct ABILITY

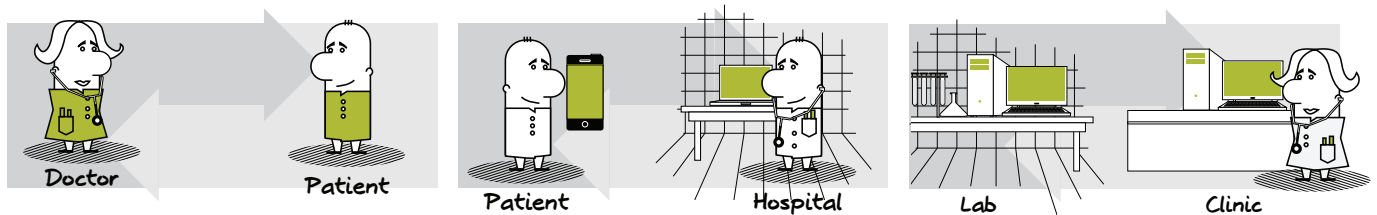
A Primer

Introducing DirectABILITY

Imagine being able to simply send a message containing a patient's medical records to a referring colleague, or being able to use a single address to connect your Electronic Health Record (EHR) to laboratories, other EHRs, and patients. What if clinical exchanges were as simple as email, but with a security and trust model that protected patient confidentiality and assured message integrity? Imagine no longer—DirectABILITY is here!

DirectABILITY is the implementation of the Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN) Direct standard from ABILITY Network Inc™. This standard is designed to deliver low-cost, simple, standards-based, open, and secure connectivity for healthcare providers. Since this protocol's inception in early 2010, ABILITY has maintained a leadership position in defining the standard and in implementing and maintaining the best-in-breed Direct service. In fact, in addition to being key participants in the open governance of the standard as it emerged, ABILITY facilitated the first live transaction on the standard¹.

DirectABILITY lowers the economic and technical barriers for participation in electronic exchange, enabling providers of all shapes and sizes to break free from the bondage of costly, unsecure, and error-prone paper-driven exchanges such as those involving fax, printer, and courier. No longer do providers have to concern themselves with issues such as someone intentionally or accidentally taking printouts containing Protected Health Information (PHI) from a printer or fax, or misdialing a fax number and exposing PHI to a non-provider, or having transcription errors while copying data from a paper form into a digital system. With DirectABILITY, any kind of data, from Word documents or PDFs to radiology images or structured data such as HL7, can be electronically exchanged. This can enable a simple clinical message to be passed from physician to physician, or the low-cost integration of disparate, remote, and otherwise unconnected electronic health information systems. In sum, NwHIN Direct represents the creation of a "health Internet." Through a partnership with Microsoft HealthVault, which provides a free Personal Health Record (PHR) for patients, ABILITY can connect providers electronically to their patient populations.



DirectABILITY and Meaningful Use

One of the key rationales for democratizing access to health care exchange with a simple, affordable protocol as Direct was to enable smaller providers to modernize and to meet Meaningful Use objectives. The following objectives may be met using Direct:

MU Measure	Description	Notes
CMS Quality Measures	Submit quality measures electronically to Medicare	Future application
Electronic Copy to Patients	Release electronic copy to patient via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Discharge Instructions	Release discharge instructions to patient via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Clinical Summaries to Patient	Release clinical summaries to patient via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Exchange Clinical Information	Release clinical summaries to patient via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Structured Lab Data into EHR	Receive structured lab results into EHR	Future application: awaiting Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) CMS standardization
Send Patient Reminder	Release clinical summaries to patient via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Provide Patient Access	Provide patient access to health information via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Provide Patient Education	Provide patient education via Direct	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction*
Summary of Care	Release summary of care to downstream provider during transition of care	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction
Immunization Registry	Release immunization event to state immunization registry	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction [†]
Report to Public Health	Submit lab results to public health	DirectABILITY is capable of this transaction [†]
Syndromic Surveillance	Submit biosurveillance data to CMS	Future application

* Transaction involves free Microsoft HealthVault patient account

† Requires state Department of Health readiness.

1. <http://www.startribune.com/business/115154589.html>



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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. More than 3,000 hospitals across the country use ABILITY network to promote care coordination and collaboration, reduce record fragmentation, participate in new care models, streamline administrative workflow and access the Direct Project network and state and community-based Health Information Exchanges.