

Senate Committees Hold HHS Secretary Confirmation Hearings. Two Senate Committees conducted confirmation hearings for President Trump's nominee for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. The Senate Finance Committee held a confirmation hearing on Jan. 29. View the hearing [here](#). The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a confirmation hearing on Jan. 30. View the hearing [here](#).

Dr. Tripathi Publishes Summary of his Tenure at ASTP/ONC. In a [blog post](#) published a day before he left his position as Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy (ASTP) and National Coordinator at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information technology (ONC), Micky Tripathi, Ph.D., reflected on his tenure and hopes for the future. He cited four productive years and the significant advances in standards and interoperability to improve the access, exchange, and use of health data, building on the work of previous administrations over the last 20 years. ASTP divided its work into three key areas: (i) Keep building the digital foundation; (ii) Make interoperability easy; and (iii) Accelerate effective and appropriate use of health data. Dr. Tripathi extended his gratitude for the deep collaborations built with federal agency and industry partners over the last four years.

ASTP/ONC Publishes Draft Version of USCDI-6. ASTP/ONC [published](#) the a new draft of the United States Core Data for Interoperability Version 6 (USCDI v6). The draft includes new data elements for: (i) Facility Information (facility address and care plan); (ii) Medical Devices (unique device identifier, date of onset, family health history); and (iii) Orders. According to ASTP/ONC, the draft seeks to reduce implementation burden, address regulatory requirements, and improve health outcomes, public health reporting, and behavioral health integration with primary care. Comments will be accepted through April 14, 2025.

HHS Fills Three New Health IT C-Suite Positions. At the end of the Biden administration, HHS named individuals to fill three Health IT positions. [Meghan Dierks, M.D](#) will serve chief artificial intelligence officer (CAIO); [Alicia Rouault](#) will serve as chief technology officer (CTO); and [Kristen Honey, Ph.D](#) will serve as chief data officer (CDO). All three work within ASTP/ONC.

CMS Updates Information on Hospital Price Transparency Compliance Requirements. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) posted updated [FAQs](#) on hospital price transparency compliance requirements. Some of the FAQs are related to new requirements that were effective January 1, 2025, as finalized in the Calendar Year 2024 Outpatient Prospective Payment System/Ambulatory Services Center Final Rule, and others are modifications to existing requirements as detailed in previous FAQs. The new and revised FAQs will help hospitals and other interested parties better understand how to meet the requirements and provide additional helpful information.

eClinical Works Becomes 8th QHIN. ASTP/ONC and The Sequoia Project [announced](#) that eClinical Works would become the eighth named Qualified Health Information

Network (QHIN). In a statement, the Sequia Project stated “The RCE’s initial role was to develop TEFCA in collaboration with ASTP. Now that TEFCA is operational, the RCE will continue to onboard and designate QHINs, as well as focus on adoption of TEFCA Exchange, advance the FHIR® Roadmap for TEFCA Exchange, roll-out additional exchange purposes, and oversee transition to permanent self-governance by the TEFCA community.”

HC3 Issues November Vulnerability Bulletin. The Health Sector Cybersecurity Coordination Center (HC3) issued its [Vulnerability Bulletin for November](#). The Bulletin includes the list of monthly patch vulnerabilities published vendors on the second Tuesday of each month, along with mitigation steps and patches. The vulnerabilities for November are from Microsoft, Google/Android, Apple, Mozilla, Cisco, SAP, Adobe, Fortinet, Ivanti, VMware and Atlassian. A vulnerability is given the classification of a zero-day when it is actively exploited with no fix available, or if it publicly disclosed. HC3 recommends patching all vulnerabilities, with special consideration to the risk management posture of the organization.

Study Examines use of Digital Health Technology by Older Adults. The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open [published](#) an article entitled “Use of Digital Health Technologies by Older US Adults.” The researchers collected data through an internet and phone survey in August 2021 as part of the National Poll on Healthy Aging, a recurring survey of adults aged 50 to 80 years. Respondents were randomly selected from the NORC AmeriSpeak panel, a nationally representative probability panel of US households. Participants provided responses about prior or current use of Digital Health Technologies (DHTs) and devices that enable the use of DHTs. DHTs included patient portals, telehealth encounters, and mobile health (mHealth) applications. Devices included desktop or laptop computers, smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, and fitness trackers. The primary outcome was any use of DHTs. The study found that older adults use various types of DHT, and they use patient portals most often. Although some older adults have unique physical and cognitive needs that can affect the utility and usability of DHTs, in aggregate they share some predictors of DHT use with younger adults.