

Ninth Annual Health IT Week Spotlights Interoperability

✖ On September 15th, the ninth annual National Health IT Week launched, with the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), the Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) and the Institute for e-Health Policy holding events in Washington, D.C. and around the country.

On Monday, ONC chief Dr. Karen DeSalvo, who reports directly to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, kicked off the week's events at the 2014 Consumer Health IT Summit. In what came to be a major theme throughout the week, DeSalvo opened the session by focusing on the importance of interoperability, calling it the ONC's top priority.

DeSalvo also announced a new Blue Button toolkit, which includes the recommended technical standards for sharing data with patients and marketing materials to help organizations communicate the value of online access to health records.

The Blue Button expands access to personal health information by allowing users to easily download their personal health records via an online portal accessible through various health care organization and agency websites. CNSI's myHealthButton app makes the Blue Button available on mobile platforms, so that users can access important health data through one touch on their smartphones.

The Blue Button, which itself promotes interoperability by encouraging various health care organizations to utilize a single destination for an individual's health data, also strengthens patient rights, said DeSalvo. By allowing patients to access personal information online, they are no longer forced to solicit various hospitals, pharmacies and insurance providers to capture an accurate description of their specific

needs, resources or other critical health information. It also means that patients are increasingly able to get lab results directly from the laboratory, rather than having to go through their provider.

The ONC this week also announced a new consumer-facing marketing campaign recommending that people utilize the Blue Button to access their records. The Blue Button Connector walks users through the advantages of its use and can be accessed online at <http://bluebuttonconnector.healthit.gov/>.

At a press conference on Thursday, DeSalvo said that increased interoperability is vitally important so that people can access health information when and where they need it. As the Blue Button continues to grow in scope and use, the ONC is getting closer to achieving that core goal.

Did you participate in any National Health IT Week events? Tweet @CNSICorp to let us know!

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