



## Joint Exploratory Team (JET) FHIR Proving Ground Kick-Off Summary

DoD/VA INTERAGENCY PROGRAM OFFICE

January 25, 2015



## Executive Summary

The mission of this Joint Exploratory Team (JET) is to establish a central development and testing environment that will foster Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) development efforts and act as the cross-Departmental standard for validating conformance of FHIR interfaces between Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Defense (DoD), and other Federal partners.

This JET brings together subject matter experts from the Departments, the DoD/VA Interagency Program Office (herein after referred to as the “IPO”), and their partners, in order to discuss the FHIR Proving Ground.

This document summarizes the key decisions reached, action items accepted, and major topics discussed during the FHIR Proving Ground JET Kick-Off, which took place January 20, 2016.

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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	5
2. New Action Items .....	5
3. Key Discussion Topics .....	5
4. Next Steps .....	8
Appendix A: Attendees .....	9
Appendix B: Acronyms .....	10

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## 1. Introduction

The mission of the Health Interoperability and Exchange Alliance (HIEA) is to operationalize the suite of standards, services, and policies necessary to achieve interoperability between the DoD and the VA (collectively known as the “Departments”) and their partners. As part of this mission, the HIEA develops and maintains implementation guidance, and adopts best practices from industry standards.

HIEA JETs are convened for specific purposes. Each HIEA JET brings together stakeholders from the Departments and the IPO as well as their partners, in order to solve interoperability challenges in a collaborative forum.

This document summarizes the key decisions reached, action items accepted, and major topics discussed during the HIEA JET Kick-Off regarding the FHIR Proving Ground, which took place on January 20, 2016.

## 2. New Action Items

The January 20, 2016 HIEA JET information session was attended by 41 participants. At the end of this meeting, the following next steps were identified as action items:

1. All JET Members should provide their level of commitment to Ms. Veronica Kwok.
2. Submit additional test cases for consideration, rather than using allergy information, to Ms. Veronica Kwok. If another test case that would be more succinct and coordinates with the JET objectives, please reach out to Ms. Kwok.
3. Submit names of the developers for access to TATRC, as well as any participants without access to VCS, to Ms. Kwok as soon as possible.

## 3. Key Discussion Topics

The following subsections provide a summary of the key topics discussed during the Kick-Off for the FHIR Proving Ground JET. The purpose of the Kick-Off is to discuss the JET approach, expected outcomes, confirm appropriate stakeholders, and address any administrative issues.

### Scope and Objectives

The goal of this JET is to build engagement among stakeholders in the DoD and VA, solidify architecture for a Proving Ground, install components, and create a functioning, ongoing platform for development. However, requirements will come from the participants to work to make the Proving Ground as useful as possible. The Departments should build the required profiles together to enhance exchange.

One objective of this JET is to establish use cases. Creating these data sharing scenarios will require collaboration from Departments and other stakeholders. This JET will also work to test the feasibility of using FHIR within use cases and security issues in a safe testing environment. There are currently plans in place to transition to standards-based deployment, not only for

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FHIR, but also including other standards such as CDA. The FHIR Proving Ground JET aims to accelerate the already existing projects and help coordination among them and between the Departments.

This JET will also develop FHIR profiles, practice data exchange, validate servers for both DoD and VA to test standards compliance, and confirm interoperability. This will include troubleshooting and working out any bugs within the context of the FHIR Proving Ground. The data, which will not include any Protected Health Information (PHI), will be tested and code repositories will be utilized to store profiles. The team is considering HAPI for any FHIR server customization. The goal is for the architecture to mimic what would happen in real practice, whether that includes simulating a back-end database connection or using an instance of a database such as AHLTA.

This initial JET is still being shaped and will need participant direction to shape it. It will focus on simple exchange that involves allergy data. Terminology work developed from a previous IPO JET, Most Common Allergen Terms, will be leveraged and used to develop FHIR Profiles.

The JET Team is asking participants to consider whether or not they find the exchange of allergy information to be an interesting test case. If another test case that would be more succinct and will still coordinate with the JET objectives, please reach out to Ms. Veronica Kwok.

The JET's six month duration began in December with the Information Session and initial planning, leading up to a testing/development in April. An April test event will allow the team to debrief and create outcomes from the event itself to share findings with the community.

There are three levels of participation identified: committed member, invited SME, and other interested parties. A committed member will be directly contributing, developing, and be hands on for the duration of the JET. An Invited SME will participate in meetings and help guide the JET. Other Interested Parties will monitor on the JET participating in meetings occasionally. Please provide your level of commitment to Ms. Kwok.

### **Test Event**

This JET could also potentially host test events. These events would be similar to HL7 Connectathons and would allow for real practice, application, and debugging in an agile approach. This structure would be mimicked but within the scope of DoD and VA. There is some discussion regarding making these quarterly exercises after the initial April event. This would allow a focus on short term objectives and wins within the progress moving forward.

HHS is hosting HealthCa.mp on April 1-2, 2016. The team is still investigating the parameters of this event. It is possible that this JET could directed to align more with that event or align objectives to become participants in a larger event such as this one.

### **TATRC and Tools**

TATRC and the IPO have come to an agreement regarding hosting the FHIR Proving Ground. Capabilities of the TATRC environment were discussed and Mr. John Orzechowski provided a demo of the TATRC environment at the JET Kick-Off. Utilizing the TATRC environment will provide a lot of functionality that would not have been otherwise available to the JET. The environment is capable of providing varying levels of security to enable flexibility for testing.

Mr. Galen Mulrooney also expressed interest in having a separate call for TATRC to go into detail regarding the technical environment. This session would be to go over details that will enable developers to get up and running soon such as how to connect to the server, what the IP address is, etc. There was also a suggestion to have two different track of JET meetings, one specifically for the developers and one for the project leaders.

All developers need to send their name to Ms. Veronica Kwok to start the process of getting TATRC access. Ms. Kwok will distribute TATRC's ESP User Guide to the group. Additionally, all JET participants that do not have access to VCS, need to submit their name to Ms. Kwok to get the access requests started.

### **Open Discussion**

There was some discussion as to whether the JET team was aiming to transition to the cloud eventually. The hope of the JET is that the objectives and work established are productive regardless of where it is hosted. However, there are cloud initiatives on the VA side that the team is aware of to build up capabilities that can be hosted as needed in a cloud-based environment or otherwise.

Mr. Mike Davis reference earlier prototypical work that had been done with FHIR for the VA focusing on allergy. This supports the FHIR Proving Ground JET focusing on allergy data as well. The JET hopes to leverage that work, compare the VA and DoD requirements, and create profiles that can interface databases such as VistA.

Mr. Galen Mulrooney brought up that a challenge with FHIR is that the FHIR resources define the 80% but the remaining 20% are at the discretion of implementers. Some federal agencies, including VA have invested in health tools promoting consistency on profiles and terminology bindings.

However, the 80-20 rule might not be a realistic target for interoperability. However, the worst thing would be that the DoD and VA have their own FHIR profiles. This JET aims to lay the groundwork for developing a common profile.

There are multiple activities occurring at both the DoD and VA regarding FHIR. This JET does not want to duplicate any efforts and, unfortunately, is not privy to many of these activities. The team will look into any initiatives that participants are aware of that have similar goals, such as the JPC-1 initiative and the joint DoD/VA Joint Test Environment effort hosted at the Alleghany Ballistics Lab Facility.

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## 4. Next Steps

The first FHIR Proving Ground JET Working Session is scheduled for Thursday 11 February 2016 at 2pm EST. This meeting will be virtual; however, there will be a conference room at the IPO if anyone is interested in attending in person.



## Appendix A: Attendees

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Mr. Russell Davis	DOD	Ms. Debbie Bucci	ONC
Ms. Janice Edwards	DOD	Mr. Galen Mulrooney	ONC
Ms. Kimberly Heerman-Do	DOD	Mr. John Snyder	ONC
Mr. Russell Davis	DOD	Ms. Aubrey Hamilton	PEO
Ms. Katharine Murray	DOD	Mr. Peter Franson	TATRC
Mr. Charles Updegrove	DOD	Ms. Ollie Gray	TATRC
Mr. John Burke	IPO	Ms. Betty Levine	TATRC
Mr. Adam Chiou	IPO	Mr. Chrisjan Matser	TATRC
Ms. Yvonne Cole	IPO	Mr. John Orzechowski	TATRC
Mr. Kevin Evringham	IPO	Ms. Kim Pham	TATRC
Ms. Patrice Ferris	IPO	Mr. Dave Carlson	VA
Ms. Jessica Glace	IPO	Mr. Mike Davis	VA
Dr. Steven Kator	IPO	Mr. Walter Grant	VA
Mr. Mark Kramer	IPO	Mr. Andrew Gregorowicz	VA
Ms. Veronica Kwok	IPO	Mr. Russell Holt	VA
Mr. Brett Marquard	IPO	Mr. Mohammad Jafari	VA
Mr. Patrick McGrane	IPO	Mr. Vannak Kann	VA
Ms. Becca Mitchell	IPO	Mr. Greg Staudenmaier	VA
Mr. Russ Ott	IPO	Mr. Curtis Trimble	VA
Mr. Ben Skupien	IPO	Ms. Maryann Wronko	VA
Ms. Yvette Tang	IPO		

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## Appendix B: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AHLTA	Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Technology Application
DoD	Department of Defense
EST	Eastern Standard Time
FHIR	Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources
HIEA	Health Interoperability and Exchange Alliance
HL7	Health Level Seven International
IPO	Interagency Program Office
JET	Joint Exploratory Team
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
PHI	Protected Health Information
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TATRC	Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs