



Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN)
Onboarding Guide
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Overview

This Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) Onboarding Guide identifies the four stages of NHIN onboarding as well as the corresponding high level activities your organization must complete to begin using NHIN standards, services and policies to securely exchange health information over the internet with organizations that are already engaged in NHIN-based exchange. Onboarding is a self-guided process that allows your organization to set the pace of completion within certain limits. This process is specifically designed for organizations that wish to exchange health information with federal agencies and large nationwide entities that require a high level of trust and the ability to engage in multi-point health information exchange. A high-level overview of the onboarding process is included at the end of this document.

The four major stages are:

1. **Qualification:** Ensuring your organization meets the eligibility criteria to begin using NHIN standards, services and policies to securely exchange health information over the Internet with organizations already engaged in NHIN-based exchanges.
2. **Validation:** Demonstrating that your organization's exchange complies with NHIN specifications.
3. **Coordinating Committee Review:** Obtaining final review and approval by the NHIN interim governing body for your participation.
4. **Activation:** Enabling your organization to exchange data using NHIN standards, services and policies.

Qualification

Review eligibility criteria specified in the Data Use and Reciprocal Support Agreement (DURSA). The DURSA outlines the roles and responsibilities for all entities exchanging information with federal agencies and large nationwide entities using NHIN standards, services and policies. Submit a complete application package to include the DURSA Joinder that has been executed by your organization. The application package also includes the 1) application; 2) NHIN Services Registry form; and 3) the Local Registered Authority form required for receipt of digital certificates. All of these documents are available by contacting the NHIN Team at nhin@hhs.gov.

The NHIN Coordinating Committee will conduct an eligibility review of your application package once you have submitted it. This review evaluates the application and executed DURSA and confirms your organization's eligibility to exchange information with federal agencies and large nationwide entities at a very robust level. It will be a minimum of 2 weeks before your organization is notified of the outcome of this review.

Summary

- Your organization submits an executed DURSA Joinder and an application package.
- The Coordinating Committee (CC) reviews the application package and makes an eligibility determination.
- The NHIN Team notifies your organization of the eligibility determination.

Validation

Validation consists of performing required conformance and interoperability testing which will demonstrate the ability of your organization's exchange gateway to comply with NHIN specifications. More information about the NHIN Validation process is available by contacting the NHIN team at nhin@hhs.gov.

As part of the Validation process, your organization needs to provide the NHIN team with test environment registry information. Once your organization receives the test digital certificate, your organization must provide the NHIN team with Services Registry information for your Test environment. At this point your organization may start validation testing which you are able to conduct at your own pace. When your validation testing is complete, your organization must submit the validation testing results to the NHIN team. Your validation results will be reviewed for compliance with NHIN specifications.

Summary

- A Test Certificate and Validation Framework account information are provided to your organization.
- Your organization conducts validation testing and submits the results.
- These results are reviewed and verified for compliance.

Coordinating Committee Review

The Coordinating Committee will review all of the components of your organization's application package and make a determination on the ability of your organization to exchange information with federal agencies and large nationwide entities currently using NHIN standards, services and policies. The review results in one of three outcomes:

- Conditional acceptance of your organization to exchange information;
- Recommendation for remediation of issues identified during the onboarding process;
- Rejection of your organization's application package.

The NHIN team will notify your organization of the outcome of this review no less than 2 weeks after the entire application package is submitted to the Coordinating Committee.

Summary

- The Coordinating Committee accepts or rejects your organization to exchange information with federal agencies or large nationwide entities using NHIN standards, services and policies or recommends remediation of specific issues.
- Your organization decides whether to remediate identified issues.

Activation

Once the Coordinating Committee has granted your organization conditional acceptance, your organization must be able to begin exchanging data in production via the NHIN within 120 days. During the Activation stage, your organization will receive a Production Digital Certificate and will need to provide the NHIN Team with your validated services. Once the NHIN Team receives your list of services, the Coordinating Committee will be notified and will execute the DURSA Joinder, legally permitting your organization to exchange health information with federal agencies and large nationwide entities using the NHIN standards, services and policies.

The NHIN team will add your services into the NHIN's Production Registry so other entities exchanging information may access them using NHIN standards, services and policies. Once your services are in the NHIN Production Registry and the production certificate (a necessary piece of the NHIN security infrastructure) is installed by your organization, your organization is able to exchange information with federal agencies and large nationwide entities using NHIN standards, services and policies.

Summary

- Your organization provides a list of services to the NHIN Team for inclusion in the NHIN Production Registry.
- The NHIN Team issues your organization a Production Digital Certificate.
- The Coordinating Committee executes your DURSA Joinder.
- The NHIN Production Registry is configured with your Services.

Congratulations! Your organization is now ready to exchange information with other entities using NHIN standards, services and policies!

High-level View of NHIN Onboarding Process

