

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### I. What is Washington Link4Health?

Washington Link4Health is a Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) initiative to help address the need for community wide clinical health data solutions, services and tools. It will enable real time medical, dental, social service support and behavioral health care information (what we term a “clinical record” for purposes of this initiative) to follow the patient across care settings and over time – regardless of the insurer, plan or provider.

To advance the coordination of care provided for Apple Health enrollees – and ultimately all Washingtonians – HCA is initiating Washington Link4Health, a multi-year initiative to advance the electronic exchange of clinical records in the state. The Washington Link4Health initiative is part of the State’s long-term efforts to improve health care quality, better manage costs and improve health outcomes for all Washingtonians.

Working with Washington’s statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE), HCA is serving as the catalyst to introduce Washington Link4Health’s first statewide service, the Clinical Data Repository (CDR). When fully populated with clinical records, the CDR service will provide authorized access to integrated medical, dental, behavioral health and social service support data for enrollees of Apple Health.

### II. Why is Washington Link4Health important to the State?

The residents of Washington deserve and expect a health care system that can keep up with them as they change addresses, employers, providers and insurers. To improve coordination of care and patient outcomes, complete and relevant real-time medical, dental, behavioral health and social service support data must be delivered to the right provider, for the right patient, at the right time. Washington Link4Health is an important first step in helping to make that happen.

Washington Link4Health’s first service, the CDR, will give members of the care community access to a real-time clinical record. This will result in an integrated record for Apple Health enrollees who may have moved from provider to provider or from plan to plan.

### III. Why is clinical information the focus of Washington Link4Health’s first service?

The transition from paper records in multiple individual offices to complete electronically exchangeable Electronic Health Records (EHR) provides emerging opportunities to embrace the use of medical, dental, behavioral health and social support data that benefits patients. Clinical information has unique properties to aid both practitioners at the point of care and patients seeking to improve their own health. Now, for the first time, with the broad shift from paper to Electronic Health Records (EHR), this valuable clinical information stream can be accessed cost effectively by using the standard protocols built into certified EHRs.

The CDR will utilize the C-CCDA standard architecture as the basis for the repository. This will leverage the significant investment providers have already made in certified EHR technology and greatly simplify the process of connecting to, populating, and extracting clinical information from the CDR. For those providers who do not have certified EHRs, the HIE is working to deploy a browser based solution.

## IV. What are the main goals of the Washington Link4Health CDR service?

The CDR service will help leverage and align data capabilities across the state to:

- Provide patients – as consumers of health care services – access to quality care based on a real time, clinically relevant electronic record that describes the medical and behavioral health care services received and prescribed.
- Give providers access to timely, actionable and integrated health information to identify gaps in care and make informed care decisions.
- Provide care teams across the community access to complete patient-level health information and shared care plans for patients with complex and chronic conditions – regardless of the entity delivering care.
- Provide methods for collecting qualitative medical and behavioral health data commonly used for performance measure reporting.
- Improve chronic illness care through better coordination and integration of care and social supports, particularly for individuals with both physical and behavioral needs.
- Support new methods that place greater emphasis on health care value rather than the volume of health care procedures. This will drive value-based purchasing across the community, starting with Washington State as the ‘first mover’.

## V. How does HCA plan to implement the CDR service?

The Health Care Authority is in the process of contracting with OneHealthPort – the State’s designated Health Information Exchange – to help implement the first service.

Because multiple state agencies provide different Medicaid services to Apple Health enrollees, there are several state agencies that will participate in Washington Link4Health’s first service.

## VI. Who will benefit from the CDR service?

As HCA implements Washington Link4Health’s first service, the initial population to benefit will be a portion of the 1.4 million Washingtonians who receive health coverage under our state’s Apple Health program. The service will be rolled out to individuals enrolled in Apple Health in at least three stages through 2017, eventually encompassing all Apple Health enrollees.

Washington State patients, healthcare providers, medical providers, Managed Care Organizations, state agencies, as well as insurers and purchasers of health care coverage will experience the benefits of Washington Link4Health.

## VII. When will the CDR service be available?

The prospective service will be launched during mid-to-late 2015. The use of the service for Apple Health enrollees will be staged over three-plus years. More details and a schedule for the rollout of the first Washington Link4Health service, the Clinical Data Repository, will be forthcoming later in 2014.

## VIII. Where can I find more information?

**Website:** [HealthIT.wa.gov](http://HealthIT.wa.gov) – please go to the HIE (Health Information Exchange) tab on the left menu.

**Email:** [HealthIT@hca.wa.gov](mailto:HealthIT@hca.wa.gov) – please put Washington Link4Health in the email’s subject line.

Version Date: 8.5.2014