Voluntary Patient Identifier Resolution

Created by the VPI Work Group
Approved by the EHR Steering Committee, 10/13/2003
Approved by HIMSS Board of Directors, 11/21/2003

WHEREAS the ubiquitous use of Electronic Health Records ("EHRs") result in significant increase in quality of medical care and patient safety AND

WHEREAS HIMSS supports the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics call for Congress creating and passing privacy legislation AND

WHEREAS the patient population does not concentrate its medical care encounters within a single practice or geographic area AND

WHEREAS the trend is to make EHR's interoperable among different practices and geographies AND

WHEREAS the benefits of the interoperable EHR cannot be recognized without identifying a patient across practice boundaries AND

WHEREAS some patients may not want to achieve the benefits of the interoperable EHR

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, for those patients who desire quality medical care and patient safety, a Voluntary Patient Identifier ("VPI") must be established that can be used across healthcare provider, health plan and geographic boundaries. Further, as the VPI spans geographic boundaries, it must be issued and maintained by a centralized, national, trusted authority such as the Department of Health and Human Services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all people have a right to secure medical records and the VPI should be used for all medical records of an individual who has elected to have a VPI, including for example, wellness encounters, sickness encounters, prescriptions, gene banks, blood donors, and public health registries.

FURTHER,

WHEREAS research on the efficacy of medical treatment is necessary to increase the quality of medical care and patient safety AND

WHEREAS research findings can best be done when treatments, outcomes, and associated factors are tracked across the lifetime of an individual

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that those with a VPI be allowed to voluntarily provide VPI identified data for research purposes.