

# Minnesota Privacy and Security Project

## Executive Summary

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### Project Purpose

This project is a portion of the Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee's work plan, which examines organization-level privacy and security policies and business practices related to health information exchange. Reliable, timely access to a patient's health information can improve the quality and efficiency of the health care delivered to the patient. However, variations in organizations' privacy and security policies and practices can serve as a barrier to appropriate access to health information. This project seeks to uncover the rationale underlying the variations, propose solutions to eliminate variations, and develop an implementation plan to standardize the best practices for ensuring privacy protections and patient rights.

### Project Approach

A major source of support for this project will be the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC) contract with RTI International. The HISPC contract is part of an initiative from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) for providing Privacy and Security Solutions for Interoperable Health Information Exchange. This initiative intends to conduct similar evaluations of privacy and security policies and practices across 34 states. Minnesota has received approximately \$350,000 to conduct the Minnesota portion of the evaluation, for the period of performance, May 1, 2006 – March 30, 2007.

The Minnesota Privacy and Security Project is more encompassing than the HISPC contract, in that, there may be important issues of privacy and security in Minnesota that are of interest to the Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee, but are outside the scope of the HISPC contract. Similarly, there may be issues that need additional discussion or activity beyond the timeframe of the HISPC contract.

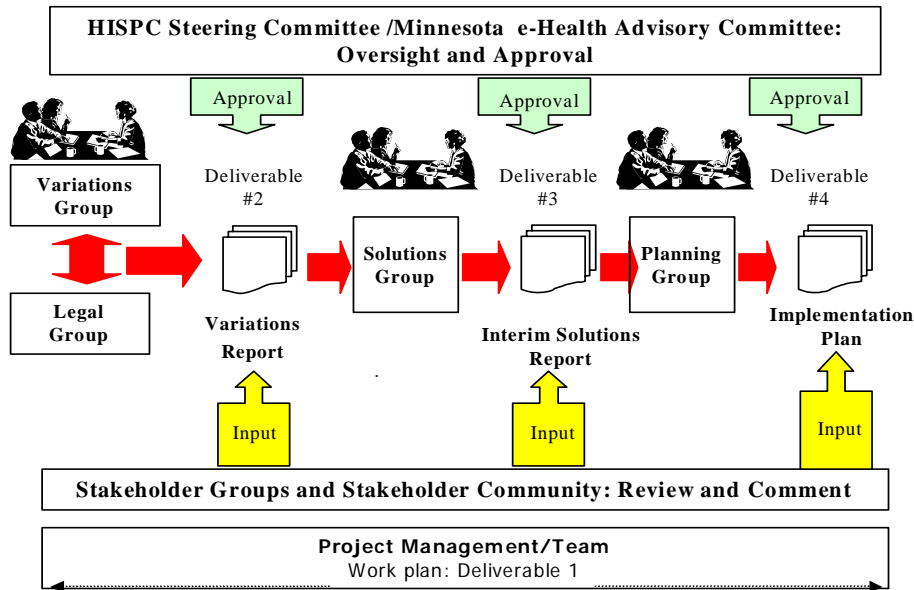
### Project Activities

The overall project design and workflow are illustrated in Figure 1. The Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee will serve as the project overseers and decision makers. The project assessments, analysis, and recommendation development will occur in four work groups: 1) Variations Work Group; 2) Legal Work Group; 3) Solutions Work Group; and 4) Implementation Plan Work Group. The work groups will be responsible for the following key activities:

- **Identify and evaluate current organizational policies and practices** related to health information exchange (HIE) and categorize the policies or practices as either: (a) supporting; (b) hindering/preventing; or (c) having no effect on HIE.
- **Identify best practices and solutions** for maintaining privacy and security protections while enabling appropriate HIE.
- **Develop an implementation plan** to organize organization-level business practices and state laws around the best practices and solutions for maintaining privacy and security protections while enabling appropriate HIE.
- **Obtaining input and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders** in the state, including consumers, patients, clinicians, physician groups, health facilities and hospitals, payers, public health agencies, government health agencies, pharmacies, long-term care facilities and nursing homes.

To ensure that the project's activities and recommendations are appropriate and useful to the community as a whole, all of the project's work products will be reviewed and presented to the Stakeholder Group/Interested Parties list. The Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee currently has over 600 individuals on an interested parties list, which will continue to grow as more stakeholders become aware of the opportunity to provide input to this project.

**Figure 1**  
**Minnesota: Privacy and Security Project**  
**Project Structure and Workflow**



To ensure that the issues addressed by the project are complete and useful to the community, the project will be conducting a number of special-topic meetings. The proposed meetings are:

- **Inter-State Exchange Issues (2 meetings):** These two meetings will examine the intersection of privacy and security policies, business practices and state laws in states contiguous to Minnesota to identify barriers to health information exchange between states.
- **Consumer Issues (2 Meetings):** These two meetings will help ensure that Minnesota’s strong commitment to the consumer perspective remains foremost in e-Health activities. These meetings will provide a structured forum for consumers to provide input on the consumer benefits of HIE, privacy protections, and patient rights. Although these are special meetings, consumers will also have the opportunity for input during many of the project’s activities.
- **CIO Meeting:** This meeting will be a meeting of the CIOs from the major health systems, hospitals, health plans and governmental agencies to review and comment on an interim Solutions Report. This meeting provides an opportunity to have a focused discussion on CIOs’ perspectives on the cost and other implications for their organizations.
- **Statewide Implementation Plan Meeting:** This meeting will be an outreach to the stakeholder community that allows them to learn about the issues identified in the project, hear from national experts, and learn more about the proposed implementation plan. We have also proposed similar, but smaller meetings outside of the metro area to reach out to rural communities and ensure that their issues are adequately addressed.

**Project Contacts**

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