

Services Fact Sheet

CommonWell Health Alliance® and its members are producing and deploying real-world, cross-vendor interoperability services that help contribute to improved health care delivery and outcomes for providers and the people they serve.

Services Available:

CommonWell services are essential to the exchange of health data along the care continuum. Members are committed to building the capability to exchange health data into their software. These real-world CommonWell services include:

- Person Enrollment — Enable each individual to be registered and uniquely identified in the CommonWell network
- Record Location — Create a “virtual table of contents” that specifies the available locations for patient information
- Patient Identification and Linking — Link each individual's clinical records across the care continuum
- Data Query and Retrieval — Enable caregivers to search, potentially select and receive needed data across a trusted network

Benefits:

- Members build the capability to exchange health data into their software, enabling providers to work seamlessly within their existing workflow
- Enhanced access, control and convenience for providers and the people they serve
- With one standard interfacing model, vendors and providers can reduce the time and resources devoted to building and maintaining multiple clinical interfaces

Service Provider: RelayHealth

Service Profiles:

- CommonWell leverages existing standards that members use designed to help enable scalable, secure and reliable interoperability
- Our service provider, RelayHealth, has built the services around the widely adopted IHE standards (e.g., PIX for patient identity, HL7 FHIR standard with RESTful protocols for record location, and XCA and XDS.b for locating and retrieving patient data)
- CommonWell is one of the first implementers of the FHIR standard for patient identification services — extending the FHIR v0.08 spec
 - As with any new standard, it continues to evolve, and CommonWell is working on its use of the FHIR standard to meet DSTU2 requirements
 - FHIR will also enable non-traditional EHR and health IT vendors across the continuum to plug into and access the CommonWell services

Patient Matching:

- CommonWell uses traditional demographic information as well as existing external “strong” identifiers such as government-issued IDs. Other industry standard methods for identifying patients are under consideration and will be incorporated as appropriate.
- In addition to identifiers, CommonWell members have developed a process that allows individuals to assist in validating potential record linkages to maximize the accuracy of identity matching.

Patient Record Queries:

- With the person’s permission, all health records regardless of their physical location are linked via a unique “person” identifier that helps providers have access to the total individual’s picture
- When providers are searching for a patient’s health record on the network, CommonWell-compliant health IT system first identifies the CommonWell Health Alliance “person” record, and then displays all matching “patient” data via the links to local health HIT system records
- The person identification service provided by CommonWell uses a learning algorithm that improves as it discovers information

Service Availability:

- Providers can access CommonWell services via their health IT supplier only if that supplier is a member and they have built the services into their product(s)
- As of June 2016, CommonWell has more than 8,000 provider sites committed to using the services, including 4,700 live in all 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico

Cost of Services to the Provider: Costs, if any, may be determined by the provider’s health information technology vendor (CommonWell member).

- The intent of CommonWell Health Alliance is to reduce the cost of data liquidity by building the capability to exchange health data into providers’ software
- CommonWell member companies are charged for services utilization under an affordable, commodity-like fee structure
- Any pass-through of these charges to providers will be at the discretion of their health IT supplier

Collaboration with Industry:

- CommonWell services leverage existing standards and supplement where needed to facilitate scalable, standards-based interoperability
- CommonWell works with the ONC, HL7 FHIR working groups and relevant standards and profiling organizations to help implement standards in a common and consistent way
- In areas where the standards need to evolve, CommonWell will work with the appropriate organizations and the ONC as needed

Requirements for Service-Utilizing Members:

- Agree to build the capability to exchange health data into their software
- Work with customers to adopt the services and actively register and enroll patients for inclusion in the available document exchange
- Facilitate the submission of documents into the system, as well as retrieve documents from the system

- Consider additional use cases and settings of care as they become available by the Alliance. Changes to the core services that require work for the members are approved by the Board of Directors prior to implementation.

Specifications:

On February 22, 2014, CommonWell Health Alliance made its initial specifications available to the general public. This documentation continues to be updated quarterly. The Specifications provide detailed information on the initial core services, standards and workflow. These documents are shared publicly on the [CommonWell Health Alliance website](#) under this [license](#).

- CommonWell Concepts — The overarching Concepts document serves as an onboarding tool providing overall key concepts and terms used by CommonWell
- CommonWell Services Specification — The Services Specification provides detailed information on the initial core services, specifically the patient identity management, API infrastructure, record locator, and document query and retrieval services. It also outlines the standards used for providing reliable, scalable and secure services
- CommonWell Use Case Specification — The Use Case Specification provides an overview of the person enrollment protocol, patient registration process and provider workflows benefited by the CommonWell services, as described in the Services Specification.

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