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Patient ID Now Coalition Releases Framework for a National Strategy on Patient Identity

CHICAGO – April 26, 2021 – [Patient ID Now](#), a coalition of more than 40 leading healthcare organizations, including the [American College of Surgeons](#), the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA), the [College of Healthcare Information Management Executives](#) (CHIME), [Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society](#) (HIMSS), [Intermountain Healthcare](#) and [Premier Healthcare Alliance](#), today released its [Framework for a National Strategy on Patient Identity: A Proposed Blueprint to Improve Patient Identification and Matching](#).

In the framework, the Patient ID Now coalition calls on the federal government to closely collaborate with the private sector and with state, local, tribal and territorial public health authorities to create and implement a national strategy around patient identification that protects patient safety and privacy. The *Framework for a National Strategy on Patient Identity* offers perspectives from across the health ecosystem and provides the building blocks from which the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) could build a national strategy that ensures accurate patient identification. Within the framework, the coalition outlines a number of actions HHS should consider if it moves forward on a national strategy. These recommendations fall under topic areas such as accurate identification and match rates, privacy, security, standardization, interoperability, data quality, and health equity and inclusion.

Some of the recommendations put forth by the coalition state that a national strategy should:

- Provide guidance and standards on the calculation of error rates across health IT systems and organizations and identify minimum acceptable levels of accuracy;
- Leverage public and private sector resources to address patient privacy, including materials from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the principles of Self-Sovereign Identity, and Privacy by Design; and
- Define the minimum standardized data set needed for patient identification and matching.

“Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to address patient misidentification throughout the health ecosystem,” said AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, PhD, CAE. “Accurate identification of patients is one of the most difficult operational issues during a public health emergency, and the nationwide response to the pandemic, including the

rollout of the vaccination programs, has highlighted the repercussions of not having a nationwide strategy to connect patients with their data.”

Since the vaccine rollout began, coalition members have received reports of vaccination registrations causing thousands of duplicate records within a single system, costing some hospitals and health systems at least \$12,000 per day to rectify these errors. There are also reports of some vaccination sites being denied additional vaccines because patient record systems incorrectly show patients as not having received previously administered vaccinations.

“The lack of a national strategy to improve patient identification and matching continues to put patients at risk and compromises our response to public health emergencies, as the current COVID-19 pandemic has painfully revealed,” said Blair Childs, Premier Inc. Senior Vice President of Public Affairs. “Advancing policies laid out in this framework will improve the nation’s pandemic response and overall public safety. It will also remove obstacles to care coordination and nationwide interoperability, as well as save millions in associated costs for the healthcare system.”

Patient ID Now represents patient groups, physicians, providers, health information professionals, health information technology companies, and public health, and is committed to advancing a nationwide strategy to address patient identification. On Capitol Hill, the coalition is currently advocating for the repeal of an archaic ban within the federal budget that hinders HHS’ ability to advance efforts to address the vital issue of patient misidentification. The Framework released today is the next step in advancing the country toward a system that accurately connects patients to their health information.

Here are what leaders of other coalition member organizations said about the Framework:

- *“Intermountain Healthcare is proud to be a founding member of the Patient ID Now Coalition,” said Intermountain Healthcare Vice President and Chief Information Officer Ryan Smith. “The need for accurate patient identification is a critical public health and safety issue. Release of this Framework for a National Strategy on Patient Identity is an important step forward toward an effective national strategy on patient identification. This essential but missing functionality would add significantly to providers’ ability to manage care safely, and if it were in place, it would assist in effectively battling the coronavirus. We look forward to working with our colleagues to achieve an effective nationwide strategy that will enable patients to be accurately identified to their health information.”*
- *“HIMSS and our members have long advocated for advancing a nationwide patient matching strategy. Throughout the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need to address the issue of patient identification. The inability to accurately match patients with their records has severe patient safety and financial implications, and impedes health information exchange,” said HIMSS President & CEO Hal Wolf. “The framework lays the foundation for a national strategy that saves lives, while protecting a patient’s choice and privacy rights.”*

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About Patient ID Now

[Patient ID Now](#) is a coalition of healthcare organizations representing a wide range of healthcare stakeholders committed to advancing through legislation and regulations a nationwide strategy to address patient identification. Founding members include the [American College of Surgeons](#), the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA), the [College of Healthcare Information Management Executives](#) (CHIME), [Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society](#) (HIMSS), [Intermountain Healthcare](#) and [Premier Healthcare Alliance](#).