

National Association for Trusted Exchange to Administer Blue Button Plus Trust Bundles, Initiating a Second Phase of NATE PHR Pilot

Washington, D.C. – June 26, 2014 – The National Association for Trusted Exchange (NATE) is pleased to begin supporting the Blue Button Plus initiative to help patients and providers securely exchange electronic health information. Blue Button Plus was created by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) to empower consumers as partners in their health and healthcare through access to and use of electronic information.

NATE will administer the Consumer Trust Bundles, which are a way for participating patients and providers to indicate their involvement in the Blue Button Initiative. NATE has been operating its own Trust Bundles in production since November 2012. “Following an onboarding process where candidates interested in being part of the bundle demonstrate that they meet or exceed the requirements of the bundle, per its policy, the actions to coordinate the technology will be very similar,” said NATE’s CTO, Dr. Robert Cothren.

NATE is a not-for-profit association that was created to reduce barriers to appropriate health information exchange. In late 2013, NATE kicked off the first phase of its PHR piloting program. Working with electronic patient engagement vendors Humetrix, Microsoft HealthVault, NoMoreClipboard and several Health Information Service Organizations in three separate states, NATE and the pilot participants developed draft policies and procedures to enable trusted bidirectional exchange of protected health information between patients and their providers. This work was funded in part by ONC’s [PHR Ignite Project](#) and produced a [report](#) that includes these draft artifacts and presents the findings of the first phase. The pilot, which is ongoing today, was also highlighted at the [2014 HIMSS Interoperability Showcase](#) where all of its participants demonstrated the diverse use cases supported by the trust framework.

“Phase 1 of our pilot leveraged the work of the Blue Button Plus community, which supports the sending of messages from providers to patients. In that pilot, we looked at ways to establish a trusted framework that would also enable patients to securely exchange health information back with their providers in a manner that their providers could reliably use the information received to make clinical decisions,” said NATE’s CEO Aaron Seib. “We are happy to begin administering the Blue Button Plus bundle as we gear up for the next phase of our work, where we plan to expand stakeholder input and make improvements to the work done during phase one.”

Sean Nolan, creator of Microsoft HealthVault and administrator of the Blue Button bundles pilot program, said “It was fantastic to kick-start the Blue Button bundles as a community -- it gave us time to learn early lessons and begin sharing important health information with our citizens. In parallel, the team at NATE has created a strong set of operating principles in support of secure health messaging that has earned the trust of stakeholders from across the country. NATE’s stewardship will ensure that the current Blue Button bundles continue to support the purpose for which they were established, and I encourage folks to get involved in the next phase of their broader work, which I am sure will be instrumental to meeting the demands of health reform and the increasingly proactive role that patients will play in their care. This is just great news for all of us.”

More information on the next phase of the NATE PHR Pilot and how to get involved can be found on the NATE’s website at <http://nate-trust.org/>.

###