Maverick Health Policy

MAVERICK'S MINUTE
CMS' Health Technology Ecosystem Initiative

August 2025

The White House's "Make Health Tech Great Again" event launched a new CMS program to improve interoperability and modernize the U.S. healthcare system dubbed the "Health Technology Ecosystem Initiative."

Overview

WHAT: On Wednesday, July 30, 2025, President Trump announced the launch of the CMS Health Tech Ecosystem Initiative, a voluntary effort to improve data sharing, expand the adoption of patient-facing digital health tools, and align health and technology companies with CMS's new Interoperability Framework. There are 60+ organizations – including **Amazon, Google, Epic, UnitedHealth Group,** and **Humana** – that have agreed to commit to the framework. CMS is still accepting pledges from other healthcare organizations to participate.

IN BRIEF: The Health Tech Ecosystem Initiative seems to build on the first Trump administration's efforts to use technology to empower patients with access to their own health information. Historically, tech innovation stalled due to lack of framework for interoperability. The new CMS-backed support signals a new age of digital health, with industry leaders pledging to follow a unified structure. Unlike the 2018 attempt, this initiative demonstrates clear progress and holds potential to transform how patients access, manage, and exchange their health data.

WHEN: The White House announced the initiative on July 30, 2025. CMS intends to highlight early outcomes by the first quarter of 2026. Participating organizations must provide access to data through FHIR APIs by July 4, 2026.

Highlights

Interoperability Framework
CMS announced a two-part framework that will function as a voluntary blueprint to achieve real-time data exchange built on FHIR standards, secure digital identity, and transparency. The framework establishes requirements for data networks, EHRs, providers, payers, and digital health apps to support patient access to data and promote care coordination. Ultimately, the goal of the framework is to eliminate the fragmentation and paperwork that burdens both patients and providers without adding new regulatory requirements.

Participant Categories
- **CMS Aligned Network**
  - Health data networks that meet the criteria of the framework will be designated as a CMS Aligned Network. According to a CMS press release, 21 networks pledged to meet the criteria.

CMS will share Blue Button claims data through these networks in early 2026 and display them in the national provider directory, which will be released later this year.

- **Providers**
  - So far, eleven <u>health systems</u>, including Cleveland Clinic, Intermountain Health, Sanford, and Providence agreed to connect with CMS Aligned Networks. Participating providers must ensure medical records are accessible across systems for both treatment and patient use.
- **Payers**
  - UnitedHealth Group, Humana, Elevance, and Aetna are the first private payers pledging to support the framework. Health plans are expected to make claims and prior authorization data available following the Patient and Provider Access API standards.
- **EHRs**
  - Seven <u>EHR vendors</u>, including Epic, Oracle, and athenahealth agreed to make health data accessible through CMS Aligned Networks. EHRs must also deliver timely appointments and encounter notifications within 24 hours to support real-time coordination across care settings.
- **Digital Health Apps -** CMS is inviting three categories of digital health apps to participate in the ecosystem that are designed to streamline access and improve patient outcomes. Patients should <u>retain</u> full control over their personal health information's accessibility and usage. All apps should conform to CMS's interoperability standards to ensure a seamless integration across all current platforms. To support this initiative, CMS will <u>publish</u> an App Library on Medicare.gov, with a list of approved apps focusing on disease prevention, affordable care coordination, and improved usability.
  - *"Kill the Clipboard,"* hopes to replace traditional paperwork enrollment forms with digital alternatives. These new tools should allow the instant transfer of patient medical history and insurance information at point of care. Post-visit, patients should receive medical summaries directly through the same mechanisms.
  - *Conversational AI Assistants* will help with tasks such as checking symptoms, navigating care options, and scheduling appointments. 18 companies pledged to distinguish educational content from clinical guidance, providing direct assistance or connecting patients with a health professional.
  - Diabetes and Obesity Management Tools collect data such as vitals, test results, and medications to craft personalized health plans addressing patients' diet, fitness, and lifestyle. These tools should retrieve data to assist early detection for these diseases and can connect with fitness platforms to optimize patient outcomes. More <u>here</u>.

💡 Maverick's Perspective

The Health Tech Ecosystem Initiative signals a strategic shift in federal digital health efforts, prioritizing consumer-facing apps and private sector interoperability efforts. The devil, however, is in the implementation details. While many of the initial players are important – the biggest of the big tech and health systems – there were many left out. Most noticeably, patient advocacy organizations were not part of the rollout – and they will be critical to make this a true patient empowerment moment in the healthcare. The initiative pledges are also voluntary in nature and may require more financial incentive carrots from the federal government to make them a reality. We acknowledge, though, that consumer-facing apps will have a serious interest in being on the list of "trusted" Medicare digital tools that is being built for Medicare.gov. We wondered about the striking <u>lack of specific support for TEFCA</u>, only vague adherence to a "trusted exchange." There does seem to be a serious effort to push for FHIR API Adoption, particularly because HTI-4 was embedded in the latest hospital payment rule that was published a day after the event. It also seems likely that the serious support for digital identification tools and a national provider directory will lead to early action. Still, we will be keeping track of real action v. mere announcements to do something as this initiative progresses.

Additional Resources

- https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/regulatory/white-house-and-cms-launch-health-tech-ecosystem-initiative-expand-use-digital-health
- https://www.politico.com/newsletters/future-pulse/2025/07/31/where-is-tom-keane-00486329
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/chrissamcfarlane/2025/07/31/cms--the-white-house-launch-health-tech-ecosystem-a-new-chapter-in-us-health-data/
- https://www.nextgov.com/digital-government/2025/07/white-house-launches-digital-health-initiative-backed-leading-tech-firms/407119/
- https://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/cms-taps-tech-firms-new-patient-health-data-ecosystem
- https://hdmgroup-1.hubspotpagebuilder.com/hdm-onestory-the-cms-interoperability-framework-more-than-just-d%C3%A9j%C3%A0-vu