



# The Sequoia Project Data Usability Workgroup Charter

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## Purpose

The Sequoia Project Data Usability Workgroup will develop specific and pragmatic implementation guidance on clinical content for healthcare stakeholders in order to facilitate health information exchange. This guidance, in the form of implementation guides covering identified priority use cases, will be readily adoptable by health information exchange vendors, implementers, networks, governance frameworks, and testing programs. The implementation guidance will target improvements necessary to enable semantic interoperability of health information. Semantic interoperability will improve the usability of data received by end users within their workflows. Implementation guides will build on existing work, including, but not limited to, FHIR Implementation Guides, C-CDA Templates, ONC and other standards such as USCDI V1, and the recommendations of the joint Carequality-CommonWell Document Content Workgroup and in coordination with related standards development organizations and industry initiatives. Input from all relevant stakeholders will be essential to developing credible implementation guides for a specific use cases and ensuring stakeholder participation is a crucial organizational objective for the Workgroup.

## Governance and Antitrust Compliance

The Data Usability Workgroup will operate under the authority and guidance of The Sequoia Project Board of Directors and the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council, considering input from the Interoperability Matters Advisory Forum. It will also actively seek input from a wide range of relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts. The Workgroup will be organized and operate in a manner that is compliant with applicable antitrust laws. The Workgroup will also be facilitated in a manner that is open, transparent and balanced without being dominated by any single interest or party and while supporting a process that allows for equity and fair play.

## Key Deliverables

The workgroup's initial operating scope will be the development of three implementation guides focusing on Data Usability and addressing each of the following high-level use cases:

- Provider-to-provider health information exchange
- Provider-to-Public Health Agency information exchange
- Healthcare entity-to-consumer information exchange

Each of these “use cases” is quite broad, and the Workgroup's first deliverable will be the identification of priority elements within these three categories to address. (See [“Process and Timeframes”](#) below.) The Workgroup has significant discretion to determine priorities and identify specific elements to address in each implementation guide. The Workgroup must, however, limit each implementation guide to a set of recommendations that is reasonable for a technology provider to address in one major software version cycle. The industry consensus is that the timeframe for such adoption is roughly eighteen months. While technology vendors may vary widely in the speed and effectiveness with which they adopt new requirements, the

Workgroup should make a good faith effort to create implementation guides that an “average vendor” reasonably could adopt within an eighteen-month period.

## **Life Cycle**

Once the above-described deliverables are complete, the Workgroup will cease to operate under this current charter. The Sequoia Project and the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council may charter future Workgroups with a similar mission or may amend this charter to include additional deliverables and thus a longer life cycle for the Workgroup.

## **Process and Timeframes**

The Workgroup will complete its work via a phased approach, with one or more interim deliverables at each phase. As this work plan evolves it will be shared with the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council and Advisory Forum.

### *Phase 1: Administration and Prioritization*

During this phase, the Workgroup will establish its meeting schedule, review this charter, and allow members to acclimate with one another. Most importantly, however, the Workgroup will identify the priority elements it proposes to address in each of the implementation guides that constitute its key deliverables, and its plan for developing drafts of these implementation guides. For each implementation guide the plan should include (i) a proposed forum for work on the implementation guide, which may be the Workgroup itself or a subcommittee; (ii) a timeline that realistically addresses deliberations needed for each priority element; and (iii) any external dependencies, such as work by other initiatives, standards bodies, or ONC.

### *Interim Deliverables:*

- Proposed priority elements, effectively a table of contents, for the implementation guides.
- Project plan as described above for creating implementation guide drafts

**Timeframe:** October 2020-March 2021

### *Phase 2: Developing Initial Drafts*

During this phase, the Workgroup will execute its project plan developed in Phase 1 to produce initial drafts of the implementation guides for public comment. The Workgroup will keep the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council apprised of any delays or unforeseen events that necessitate updates to the project plan.

### *Interim Deliverables:*

- Complete drafts of each implementation guide

**Timeframe:** April 2021-[TBD, based on project plan, but not to go beyond January 2022]

### *Phase 3: Public Comment Period/Recommended Next Steps*

During this phase, while the public comment period is open for the implementation guide drafts, the Workgroup will evaluate the current state of play with respect to Data Usability, identify high priority elements in any of the three high-level “use cases” that are not addressed by the current-scope implementation guides, and make recommendations to the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council on next steps with respect to work on Data Usability issues.

#### *Interim Deliverable:*

- Recommendations on Data Usability next steps for The Sequoia Project and the Interoperability Matters initiative

Timeframe: [TBD, based on end of Phase 2]-[60 days after start]

### *Phase 4: Finalizing Implementation Guides*

During this phase, the Workgroup will address feedback received during the public comment period and approve final versions of the implementation guides for publication.

*Interim Deliverable:* n/a; the deliverables for this phase are the overall project’s key deliverables

Timeframe: [TBD, based on end of Phase 3]-[3 months after start]

## **Operating Principles**

The Workgroup, and its individual members, will abide by these principles throughout its work:

- All work must be open and transparent, with published meeting agendas, meeting notes, outcomes, a roster of all Workgroup members, and documentation of all decisions.
- Varying community perspectives and needs must be accommodated and reflected in the deliverables.
- Prioritization decisions must be based on practical experience of production data exchange; the work must focus on improvements to existing work rather than designing entirely new approaches.
- Prioritization and scope decisions, once reached, must be honored; additional elements can’t be added to the project mid-stream without approval of the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council.
- All proceedings, recommendations, and deliverables must remain vendor, provider, and technology neutral.

## **Workgroup Composition and Responsibilities**

The Workgroup is open to all stakeholders, regardless of any affiliation with the Sequoia Project, to help ensure diverse membership across a broad spectrum of the healthcare landscape. Generally speaking, all volunteers should be accommodated on the workgroup, unless doing so

would result in more than one member from the same organization, or an over-representation of a particular stakeholder group. The Sequoia Project will make reasonable efforts to recruit members from under-represented stakeholder groups. The Sequoia Project will:

- Publicize a call for participation in the workgroup, including a summary of the plans outlined in this charter and in particular a description of the three high level use cases defined in [Key Deliverables above, with the healthcare industry](#).
- Track volunteers and slot them into defined stakeholder groups (for example):
  - Healthcare provider organizations (e.g., medical groups (reflecting a range of group size and ownership models), physicians (reflecting a range of practice sizes, specialties, and settings), hospital and health systems across a range of settings (e.g., both urban and rural), and other healthcare settings, such as federally qualified health centers
  - Associations and organizations representing the health IT community and its key components
  - Consumers/individuals/caregivers
  - Vendors (including EHR, other certified and non-certified health IT, and digital apps)
  - Payers
  - Public health authorities
  - Health information networks and service providers
  - Federal and state government representatives
  - Legal, technology, standards, and policy subject matter experts
- Evaluate the volunteer pool after a designated period of time and fill in any stakeholder representation gaps through recruitment efforts.
- Ensure that sub-workgroups have an equitable distribution of participants from relevant stakeholder groups.

Experience indicates that it is difficult, and unnecessarily limiting, to apply very specific, predetermined composition requirements on an all-volunteer workgroup. The more flexible approach outlined above is designed to balance opportunity for as many volunteers as possible, with the need to have representation from as many stakeholder groups as possible.

Nonetheless, it may not be possible to accommodate all those who wish to contribute or to have complete representation of all perspectives in every workgroup meeting. The Co-Chairs and Sequoia staff, therefore, will make additional efforts to gather input beyond workgroup members, potentially including holding one or more listening sessions/webinars/conference calls, establishing a project forum or Wiki, and/or using online survey tools to gather input beyond Workgroup members.

## Workgroup Leadership and Staffing

The Sequoia Project Staff (contract and employees) will assist in facilitating the Workgroup. Workgroup Co-Chairs are appointed by the Interoperability Matters Leadership Council in consultation with The Sequoia Project Board. The Co-Chairs shall have the discretion to engage other stakeholders and subject matter experts as they deem necessary. Workgroup Co-Chairs should have the requisite subject matter expertise, leadership, and facilitation skills to assure the work is conducted in an effective, open, and fair manner. The Co-Chairs may establish any necessary Workgroup subgroups. Such a subgroup will present its work to the full Workgroup for consideration as normal business as deemed necessary by the Workgroup Co-Chairs. Co-Chair duties include:

- Leading and facilitating Workgroup efforts, including the development and maintenance of Workgroup deliverables, and assigning subgroups, as necessary, to draft deliverables,
- Facilitating Workgroup meetings in a manner that assures that all Workgroup members are actively contributing to the Workgroup's efforts and able to express their views,
- Enabling balanced opportunities for all Workgroup members to contribute to the discussions and minimizing any single interest, individual or organization from dominating the discussion,
- Serving as the public face of the Workgroup,
- Conducting the work in a manner that is efficient, in accordance with the work plan, and
- Meeting with Sequoia staff prior to each Workgroup meeting to prepare the agenda and discussion topics.

Staffing support will include:

- Program support staff to help develop agendas, schedule calls and support Work Group communications and coordination.
- Subject Matter Expert(s) to support development and updates to the deliverables.

## Responsibilities

In its role as a Workgroup for The Sequoia Project's Interoperability Matters Cooperative, the Workgroup members will fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Maintain personal involvement in Workgroup meetings and related activities,
- Respect the confidentiality of discussions held in the Workgroup,

- Publicly support the Workgroup activities,
- Represent the necessary expertise to contribute to the development of the Workgroup deliverables and enlist feedback from the constituents represented, and
- Accept occasional assignment of tasks between Workgroup meetings.

## Decision-Making and Relationship to Interoperability Matters and The Sequoia Project

The Workgroup will aim to reach consensus, where possible, and will invite differing views. Regardless of whether there is consensus, the Workgroup will assure diverse stakeholder views are heard. Areas of agreement will be identified, and divergent views documented. Where there is not consensus, the group will consider recommendations for further study to move towards consensus.