

Research Initiative for Identity Management for the Nationwide Health Information Network - (NwHIN)/eHealth Exchange

In today's exchange of medical information through the eHealth Exchange (eHE), patient identifiers such as social security number (SSN), medical record number (MRN), Veterans Affairs (VA) Integrated Control Number (ICN) or Department of Defense (DoD) Electronic Data Interchange Personal Identifier (EDIPI) are used as the key data element for sharing partners to exchange information

The eHE requires each sharing partner to store a cross reference between local and external patient identifiers. Once identifiers are exchanged, a sharing partner must rely on the recipient sharing partner, agreements, and laws (federal, state, or local) for the security of the patient's identifiers. Protecting identity is a pivotal concern of the DoD and others participating in health exchanges creating the opportunity for new solutions to remove the need to use and rely on these identifiers.

The solution is to use a soft token, or temporary identifier, with a short life or expiration to reduce the exposure of patient identifiers. Using soft tokens with an expiration is similar to the use of temporary credit card numbers. If a soft token is used by a requesting sharing partner after the token's expiration then the responding sharing partner (the partner that created the soft token) sends back an error and the requesting sharing partner has to re-discover that patient and receive a fresh soft token.

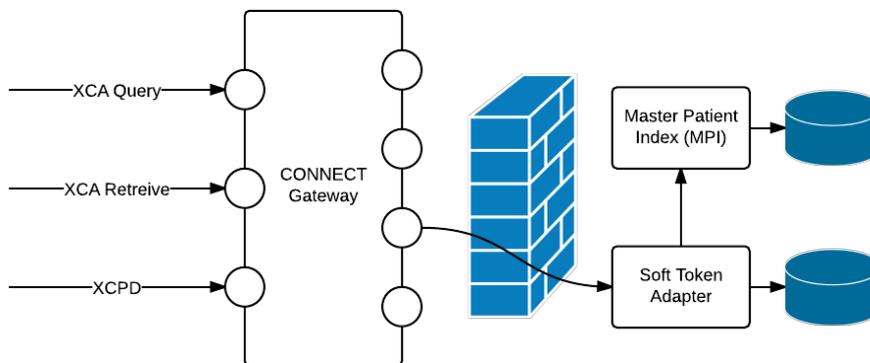
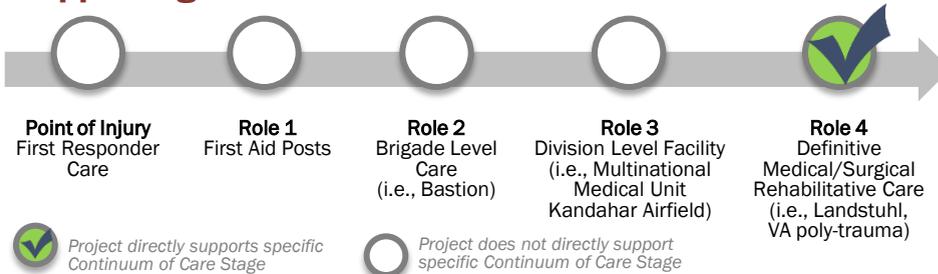


Exhibit 1 - Soft Token Identifier Communication

Supporting the Continuum of Care



Research Areas

Temporary Identifiers

- Eliminate the need to expose enterprise patient identifiers to external organizations
- Comply with eHealth Exchange protocol which states that, once shared, an identifier can never be associated with another patient, but also cannot be assumed to be valid forever
- Can be managed and generated internally within an organization, or outsourced to a third-party which maintains a central repository

PII/PHI Exposure Risk Reduction

- Eliminating the transfer of enterprise identifiers reduces the risk of external PII/PHI exposure

Safer Messaging

- Patient Discovery and Document Query messaging within the eHealth Exchange is made more secure by removing the need for the Social Security Number and other enterprise identifiers from the external workflow



This project is managed by the **Pacific Joint Information Technology Center**, which focuses on rapidly researching, testing, and developing warfighter medical solutions and products, through pilots or prototypes in support of the DOD.