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TEFCA Presentation to NCVHS

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- Goals and benefits of the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement
- TEFCA Overview
- Spotlight: Public Health
- Educational Resources and Upcoming Events

TEFCA is Live and Looking to the Future with FHIR®!

Goals and Benefits of TEFCA

TEFCA Goals

1. Establish a universal governance, policy, and technical floor for nationwide interoperability

2. Simplify connectivity for organizations to securely exchange information to improve patient care, enhance the welfare of populations, and generate health care value

3. Enable individuals to gather their health care information

21st Century Cures Act - Section 4003(b)

*"[T]he National Coordinator shall convene appropriate public and private stakeholders to **develop or support** a **trusted exchange framework** for trust policies and practices and for a **common agreement** for exchange between health information networks."*

[emphasis added]

Relevant, trusted information from nationwide sources for:

Individuals
Use an app to access their own records from TEFCA-connected sources located across the nation

Providers and Health Systems
Improve care, coordination and population health by obtaining a more informed picture of care across settings through fewer connection points

Public Health
Improve quality, reduce costs, and expand public health interoperability

Payers
Get and share data needed for care management, value-based care, payer-to-payer exchange, etc.

Health Information Networks
Enhance the value of network participation and lower the cost of connecting with other networks

Technology Developers
Provide a scalable policy and technical ecosystem for innovation

Researchers (Future)
Improve quality, reduce costs, and expand participation in clinical research

For more detail on the benefits of TEFCA for stakeholders, see factsheets at: **https://rce.sequoiaproject.org/rce-resources-new/**

TEFCA is Live!

Congratulations to Our Newly Designated QHINs™!

eHealth Exchange · KONZA NATIONAL NETWORK · MedAllies · Epic Nexus · HEALTH GORILLA · commonwell HEALTH ALLIANCE · Kno2
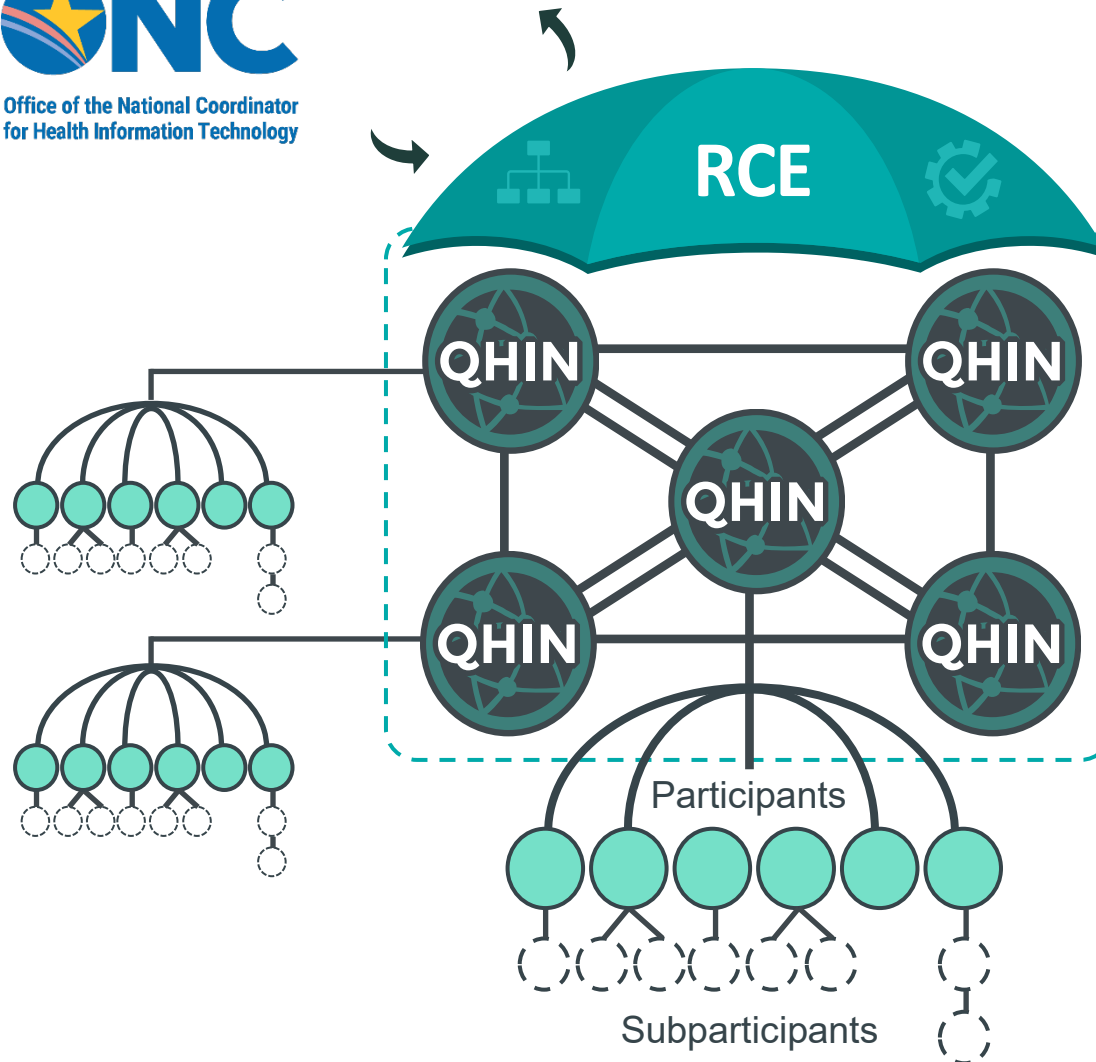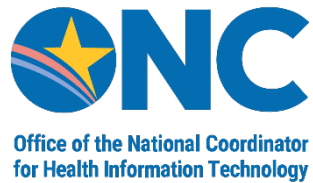
Applicant QHINs include eClinicalWorks and Surescripts Health Information Network.

TEFCA Overview

How Does Exchange Work Under TEFCA?

ONC defines overall policy and certain governance requirements.

RCE^{TM} provides oversight and governing approach for QHINs.

Qualified Health Information Networks^{TM} (QHINs^{TM}) connect directly to each other to facilitate nationwide interoperability.

Each QHIN connects Participants, which connect Subparticipants.

- Collaborate with ONC to develop baseline policy and technical requirements

- Evaluate Applicant QHIN and Designate QHINs

- Maintain the RCE Directory Services

- Establish and oversee representative governance process

- Engage with and solicit feedback from stakeholders

TEFCA Components

Trusted Exchange Framework	Framework Agreements	Standard Operating Procedures	QHIN Technical Framework	QHIN Onboarding	Metrics	Governing Approach

Common Agreement

Each QHIN voluntarily enters into the same contractual agreement with the RCE by signing the Common Agreement

**Participant/Subparticipant Terms of Participation**
All Participants and Subparticipants voluntarily agree to the Terms of Participation without modification as part of their agreements with their TEFCA connector

TEFCA connector
A QHIN, Participant, or Subparticipant that offers services to connect into TEFCA exchange

TEFCA connected entity
A QHIN, Participant or Subparticipant that has signed a Framework Agreement. Entities may connect into exchange at any level.
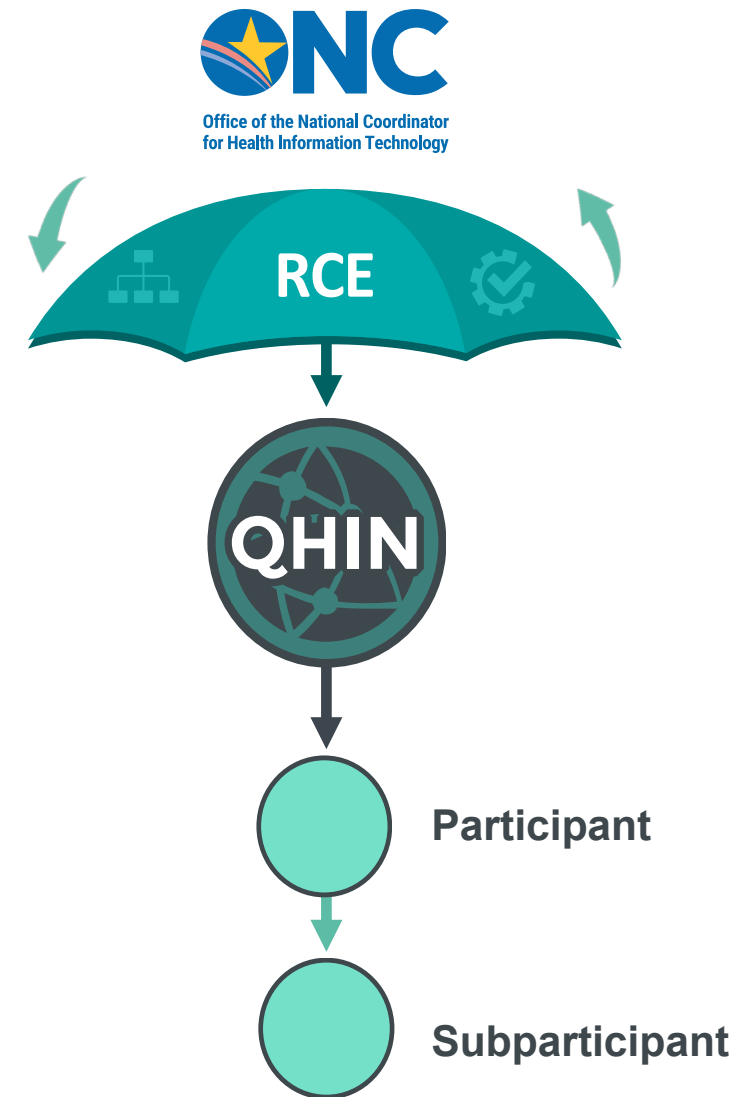
Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

What is an SOP?
- An SOP is a written procedure or other provision that is incorporated by reference into the Framework Agreements to provide detailed information or requirements related to TEFCA Exchange

- Each SOP identifies the applicable parties to which the SOP applies (e.g., QHINs, Participants, and/or Subparticipants)

What is the Exchange Purposes (XPs) SOP?
- The XPs SOP details specifications relevant to when and how information can be requested or shared through TEFCA Exchange

What is an Exchange Purpose (XP) Implementation SOP?
- XP Implementation SOPs provide additional details for specific use cases, as needed

SOPs create the flexibility for TEFCA to evolve and expand over time and will be created and finalized through a defined change management process

QHIN Technical Framework

- The QHIN Technical Framework (QTF) outlines the technical, functional, privacy, and security requirements necessary for QHINs to exchange data

- The QTF primarily addresses TEFCA transactions, and is generally silent on how the necessary functional outcomes are achieved within a QHIN

- Some requirements in the QTF must be enforced at the Participant and Subparticipant level

The QTF is available at RCE.SequoiaProject.org
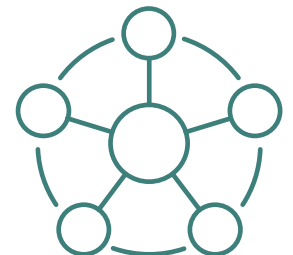
RCE Directory

- The RCE maintains the RCE Directory Service to support exchange of information between and among TEFCA connected entities

- This key component of TEFCA Exchange enables access to the electronic endpoints and other necessary information about all entities that participate in TEFCA Exchange

- RCE Directory information is consistently kept up to date to ensure that all information flows to the right destination no matter how the network changes

- TEFCA connected entities can share across trusted endpoints without having to know electronic addresses in advance

- QHINs play a key role in maintaining entries in the RCE Directory Service

Governing Approach

- TEFCA connected entities can engage in governance under the Common Agreement

- The Common Agreement establishes a Governing Council that:

  - » Reviews amendments to the Common Agreement, QTF, and SOPs

  - » Serves as a resource to the RCE and a forum for discussion

  - » Provides oversight for resolution of disputes

- A Transitional Council serves during TEFCA's first year

- ONC oversees the work of the RCE, which has specific obligations to follow the governance procedures set forth in the Common Agreement

- Advisory groups will be formed to provide targeted input from stakeholders

QHIN CAUCUS

PARTICIPANT/ SUBPARTICIPANT CAUCUS

GOVERNING COUNCIL

ADVISORY GROUPS

CYBERSECURITY COUNCIL
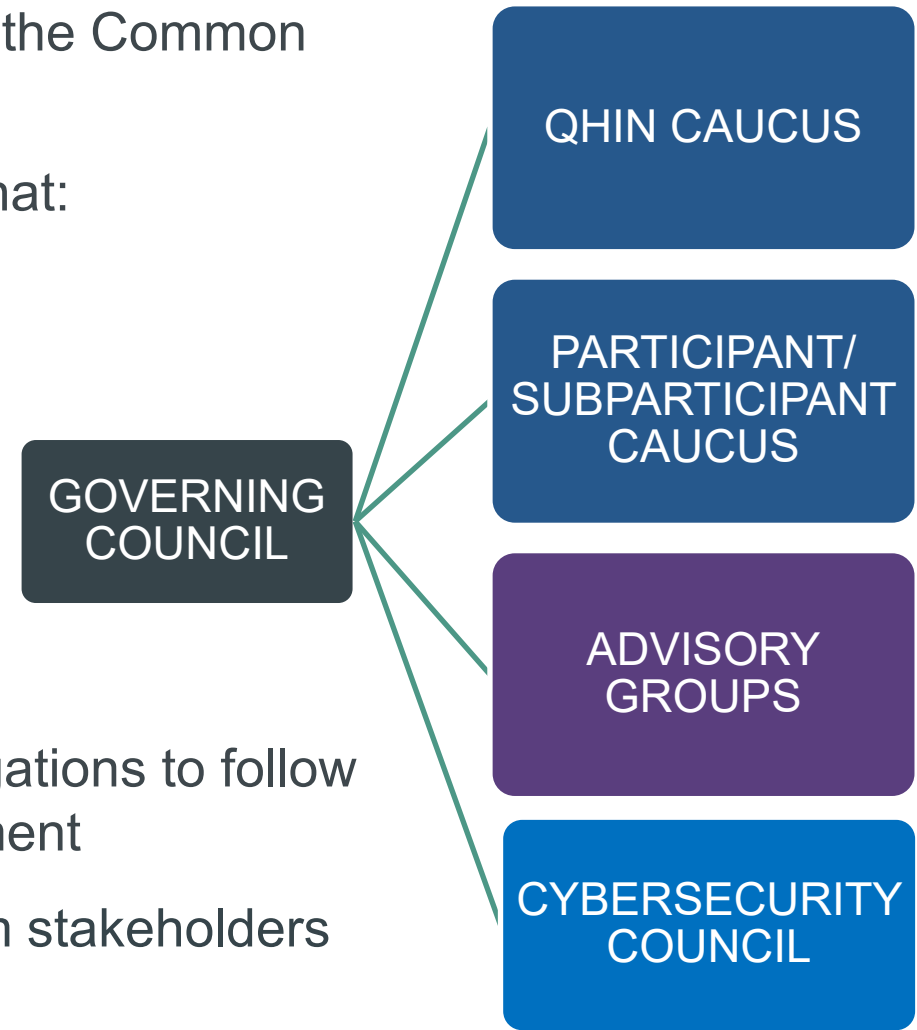
TEFCA is Looking to the Future

- Updates to technical and policy documents to support greater use of FHIR
- Better support for use cases beyond Treatment
- Stand-alone and static Terms of Participation to ease onboarding
- Ability to participate with multiple QHINs

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Common Agreement Version 2.0 and Related Documents

Common Agreement Versions At-A-Glance

January 2022

Common Agreement v1

The Common Agreement version 1 was the initial version of the Common Agreement and reflected policies developed with extensive public input.

Related QTF Version: 1
Related FHIR Roadmap Version: 1

December 2023

Common Agreement v1.1

The Common Agreement version 1.1 included changes required by HHS prior to TEFCA exchange going live. *This is the version in operation as of the official launch of TEFCA exchange.*

Related QTF Version: 1.1
Related FHIR Roadmap Version: 2
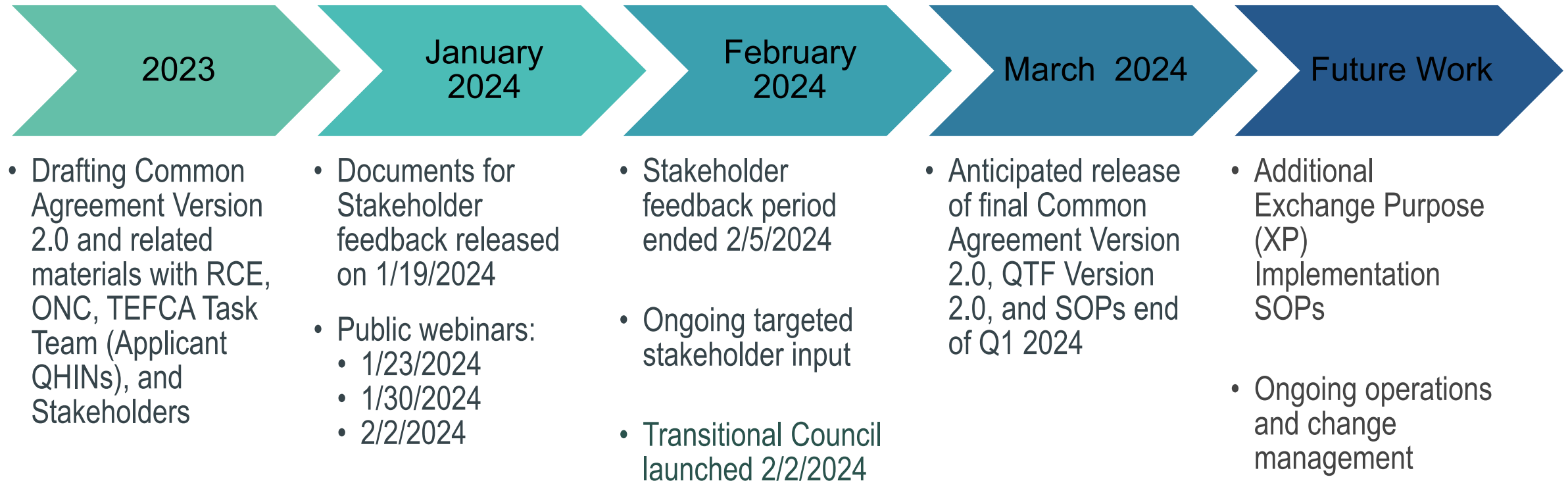
Common Agreement v2

The Common Agreement version 2 will include enhancements and updates to require support of HL7 FHIR® based transactions.

Related QTF Version: 2 – DRAFT
Related FHIR Roadmap Version: 2
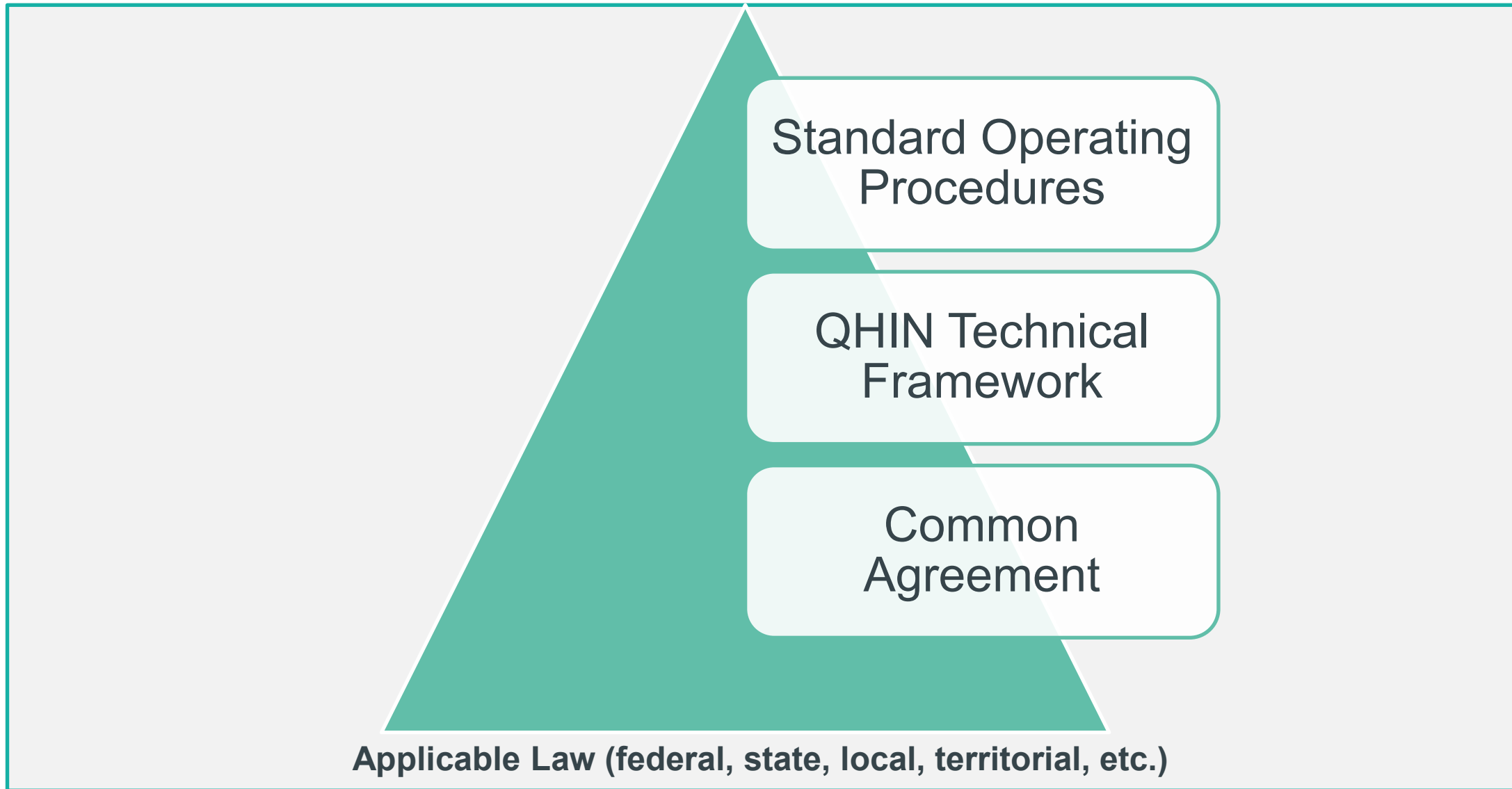
Common Agreement and QTF Version 2.0 Evolution

2023

- Drafting Common Agreement Version 2.0 and related materials with RCE, ONC, TEFCA Task Team (Applicant QHINs), and Stakeholders

January 2024

- Documents for Stakeholder feedback released on 1/19/2024

- Public webinars:
  - 1/23/2024
  - 1/30/2024
  - 2/2/2024

February 2024

- Stakeholder feedback period ended 2/5/2024

- Ongoing targeted stakeholder input

- Transitional Council launched 2/2/2024

March 2024

- Anticipated release of final Common Agreement Version 2.0, QTF Version 2.0, and SOPs end of Q1 2024

Future Work

- Additional Exchange Purpose (XP) Implementation SOPs

- Ongoing operations and change management

Standard Operating Procedures

QHIN Technical Framework

Common Agreement

Applicable Law (federal, state, local, territorial, etc.)

The RCE released a set of draft materials in support of FHIR adoption and other advancements. These build from the existing framework and include:

Common Agreement Version 2.0

QHIN Technical Framework Version 2.0

Participant/Subparticipant Terms of Participation (ToP)

New Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- Expectations for Cooperation
- Delegation of Authority
- Governance Approach
- XP Implementation SOP: Public Health (PH) SubXP-1
- RCE Directory Service Requirements Policy

Updated SOPs

- Exchange Purposes (XPs)
- XP Implementation SOP: Individual Access Services (IAS) Demographic Matched – *Updated from IAS Exchange Purpose Implementation*
- IAS Provider Requirements – *Updated from IAS Provider Privacy and Security Notice and Practices*
- XP Implementation SOP: Health Care Operations (HCO) SubXP-1 – *Updated from previously released draft*

New Explanatory Resources

- TEFCA Glossary
- TEFCA Cross Reference Resource

# Key Concepts that have Evolved: Version 1.1 to Version 2.0

Common Agreement and QTF Version 1.1	Proposed Common Agreement and QTF Version 2.0
Fundamental requirements and components of TEFCA mostly included within Common Agreement and QTF Version 1.1	More details moved to SOPs
Model Participant/Subparticipant flow-down terms	Static Participant/Subparticipant Terms of Participation
Exchange only occurs QHIN-to-QHIN via IHE protocols	Facilitated FHIR available between Participants/Subparticipants
Exchange within QHINs not considered TEFCA exchange	TEFCA Exchange identified by unique TEFCA code
Six (6) authorized Exchange Purposes (XPs)	Six (6) authorized Exchange Purposes (XPs) with new sub exchange purposes and implementation guidance
Two (2) XPs require a response: Treatment and Individual Access Services (IAS)	Three (3) XPs require a response: Treatment, IAS, and Health Care Operations SubXP-1 (FHIR only)
All QHINs, Participants, and Subparticipants must respond	Introduction of Principal/Delegate roles and requirements
Participants and Subparticipants may not participate with more than one QHIN	Participants and Subparticipants may conduct TEFCA Exchange in multiple QHINs using multiple Nodes
Privacy/security obligations apply to all	Privacy/security obligations apply to all

Support of FHIR and Updated Roadmap

- **Stage 1**: FHIR Content Support
  - − Included as part of the initial launch of TEFCA.
  - − QHIN-brokered IHE exchange of FHIR payloads between QHINs available.

- **Stage 2**: QHIN-Facilitated FHIR Exchange
  - − QHIN support for facilitated FHIR API exchange required.
  - − Participant and Subparticipant exchange via FHIR APIs available.

- **Stage 3:** QHIN-to-QHIN FHIR Exchange
  - − Support for exchange between QHINs via FHIR APIs.

- **Stage 4:** End-to-End FHIR Exchange
  - − Support for QHIN-brokered FHIR Exchange between Participants and Subparticipants.
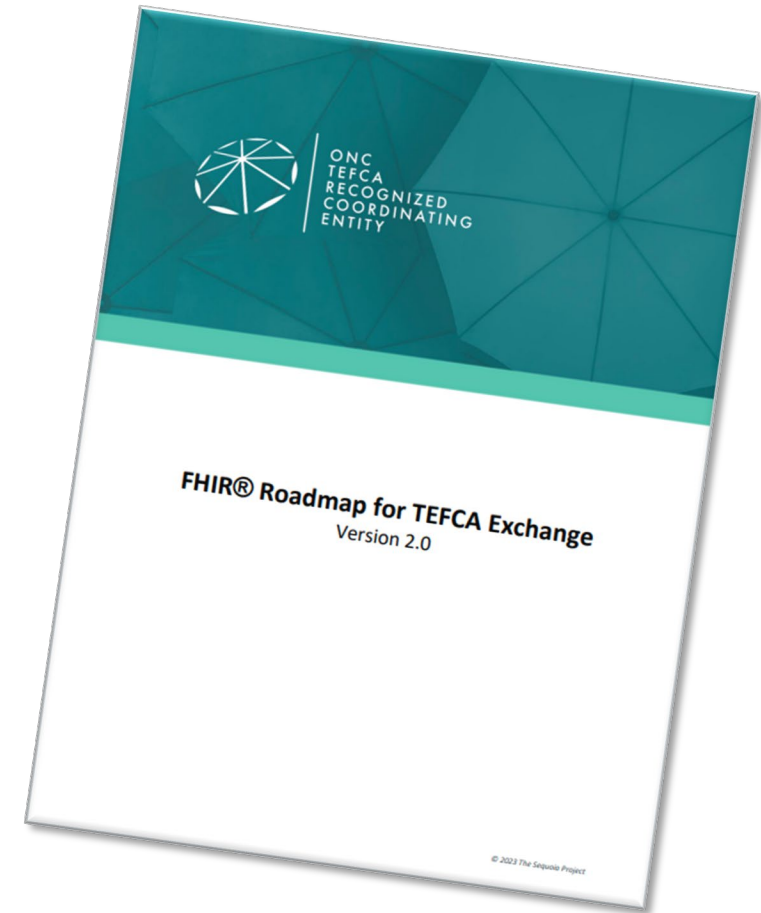
FHIR® Roadmap for TEFCA Exchange Version 2 (sequoiaproject.org)

Spotlight: Public Health

- The Exchange Purpose identifies the reason for which information could be requested or shared through QHIN-to-QHIN exchange.

- Only these six Exchange Purposes are authorized under the Common Agreement.

- The Exchange Purposes SOP specifies that Treatment and Individual Access Services (IAS) require Responses.

- Eventually, the other four Exchange Purposes will require Responses in conformance with forthcoming implementation SOPs. These will be rolled out with adequate time for stakeholders to prepare.

- Additional Exchange Purposes may be added over time, including whether they require Responses.

Permitted Exchange Purposes

Treatment

Payment

Health Care Operations

Public Health

Government Benefits Determination

Individual Access Services

Exchange Purposes or "XPs"

- **"Treatment," "Payment," and "Health Care Operations"** generally have the same meanings as they have under the HIPAA Privacy Rule and apply to all TEFCA Information, regardless of whether the parties to exchange are HIPAA Covered Entities or Business Associates

- The **Public Health** Exchange Purpose includes Requests for, Uses of, and Disclosures of information by Public Health Authorities that are consistent with the HIPAA Privacy Rule and other Applicable Law

- The **Government Benefits Determination** Exchange Purpose supports governmental agencies that need information to determine whether a person qualifies for non-health government benefits in a manner that is consistent with the HIPAA Privacy Rule and other Applicable Law

- The Common Agreement anticipates the use of consumer-facing applications that would assist Individuals in obtaining access to their health information. This Exchange Purpose is called **Individual Access Services**
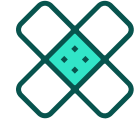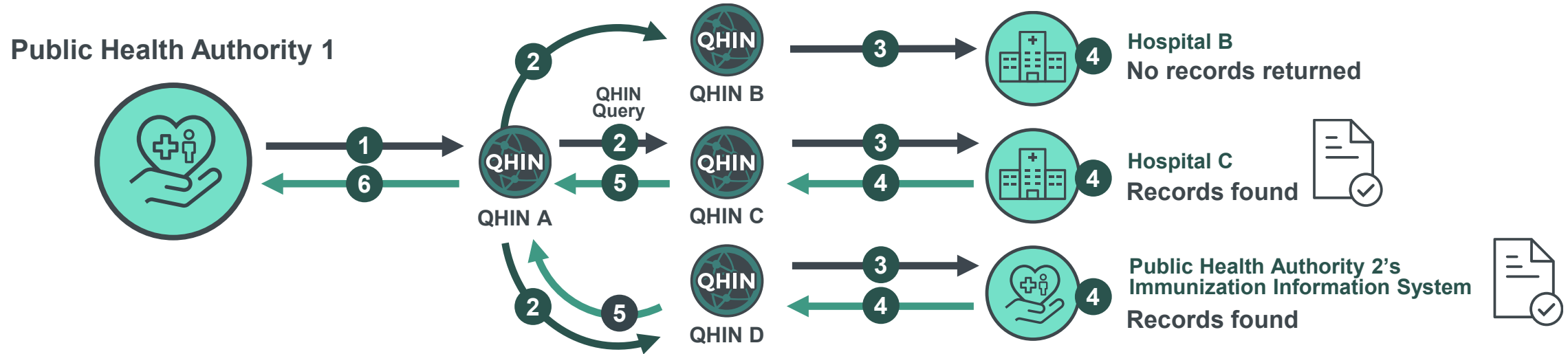
- **Public Health:** with respect to the definition of Exchange Purposes, **a Request, Use, Disclosure, or Response permitted under the HIPAA Rules and other Applicable Law for public health activities and purposes involving a Public Health Authority**, where such public health activities and purposes are permitted by Applicable Law, **including a Use or Disclosure permitted under 45 CFR § 164.512(b) and 45 CFR § 164.514(e)**. For the avoidance of doubt, a Public Health Authority may Request, Use, and Disclose TI hereunder for the Exchange Purpose of Public Health to the extent permitted by Applicable Law and the Framework Agreements.

- **Public Health Authority:** has the meaning assigned to such term at 45 CFR § 164.501.

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Use Case: Public Health Authority queries TEFCA for a case investigation.

Public Health Authority 1

QHIN A → QHIN Query → QHIN B, QHIN C, QHIN D

QHIN B → Hospital B — No records returned

QHIN C → Hospital C — Records found

QHIN D → Public Health Authority 2's Immunization Information System — Records found

1 A Public Health Authority 1 (Participant) is performing a case investigation. It has a public health need and the appropriate authority to understand all previous care provided to a particular patient. It sends a request for medical records to QHIN A for the Exchange Purpose of Public Health.

2 QHIN A initiates QHIN Query to all QHINs.

3 QHIN B, C, D execute their query methodology to request medical records from their Participants.

4 Hospital B finds no records. Hospital C and Public Health Authority 2's Immunization Information System (both Participants) respond to their respective QHINs with medical records.

5 QHIN C, D send medical records to QHIN A.

6 QHIN A sends medical records to the Public Health Authority.

*Public Health is an authorized Exchange Purpose under the Common Agreement but response to a query for this Exchange Purpose is not required as of February 2023.

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TEFCA and Public Health

- Exchange for Public Health is an Exchange Purpose specifically defined in TEFCA
  - » Provides a common data sharing structure that potentially alleviates the need for multiple one-off data sharing agreements
  - » QHIN Query
    - – Allows PHAs to query for information from Providers and others using TEFCA Exchange
    - – Allows others to query public health using TEFCA Exchange
  - » QHIN Message Delivery
    - – Allows others to push data to public health for reporting using TEFCA Exchange
    - – Allows public health to push information to PHAs and others using TEFCA Exchange

- Important considerations
  - » Participation in TEFCA will bring benefits but is **voluntary**
  - » Public health is encouraged, but **not required to respond to requests**
  - » **Applicable laws related to information sharing still apply**, including HIPAA and any STLT provisions related to public health
  - » Common Agreement has specific **privacy practices and security safeguards** to protect data exchanged
  - » PHAs and health care organizations will need to **consider what, if any, gaps exist in their current privacy and security** infrastructure and identify any needed enhancements for participation in TEFCA

- Draft SOP prioritized reporting and investigation, but allows for any other public health use that fits the definition
  - » Condition/Disease Reporting
    - – Electronic Case Reporting
    - – Electronic Lab Reporting
  - » Case Investigation
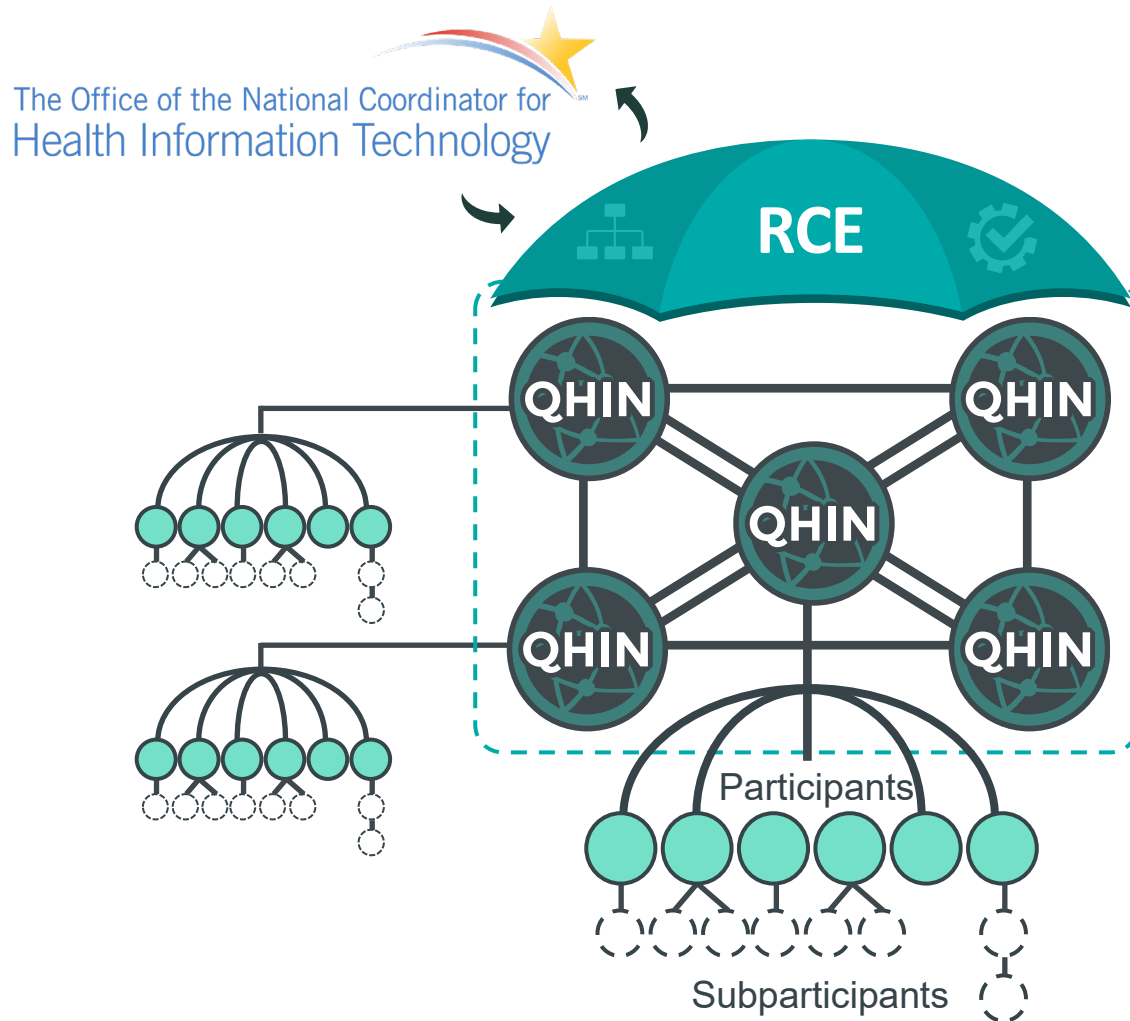
- Existing technology partners
- Regional or state HINs
- Public sector partners
- New relationships

Exchange Modalities

- **QHIN Message Delivery**
  - » QHIN, Participant, or Subparticipant → Public Health Authority or Public Health Intermediary listed in the RCE Directory as capable of receiving Message Deliveries

- **QHIN Query**
  - » PHAs listed in the RCE Directory Services → QHIN, Participant, or Subparticipant

- **Facilitated FHIR**
  - » **Push.** QHIN, Participant, or Subparticipant →Public Health Authority or Public Health Intermediary listed in the RCE Directory with a FHIR endpoint
  - » **Request.** PHAs listed in the RCE Directory Services → QHIN, Participant, or Subparticipant with a FHIR endpoint

Educational Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

The 21st Century Cures Act, signed by President Obama in 2016, calls on the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to "develop or support a trusted exchange framework, including a common agreement among health information networks nationally." The Sequoia Project serves as the ONC TEFCA Recognized Coordinating Entity® (RCESM) under a contract with ONC.

The overall goal for the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common AgreementSM (TEFCA SM) is to establish a universal floor for interoperability across the country. The Common Agreement will establish the infrastructure model and governing approach for users in different networks to securely share information with each other—all under commonly agreed-to expectations and rules and regardless of which network they happen to be in.

These Frequently Asked Questions address common stakeholder questions and will be updated regularly. You may submit a question to be considered for addition to this list by emailing rce@sequoiaproject.org.

The Common Agreement and related resources, including a User's Guide, are posted to the RCE website. All capitalized terms below are specifically defined in the Common Agreement.

Section 1: Overall Process and Timeline

What is the purpose of the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA)?

What is the role of the ONC TEFCA Recognized Coordinating Entity (RCE)?

https://rce.sequoiaproject.org/rce/faqs/

THINKING ABOUT JOINING TEFCA?

Questions to ask your QHIN or other TEFCA connector

Nationwide sharing of health information is now possible under the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement^{SM} (TEFCA^{SM}). The federally endorsed framework provides access to clinical data when and where it is needed for informed decisions, efficient care, and better outcomes.

In order to assist providers, payers, health information networks, public health agencies, app developers, and others that want to participate in TEFCA exchange choose the best QHIN, health information network, or other technology partner for connecting, the RCE has assembled a list of important questions to ask potential QHIN vendors or intermediary connectors.

TEFCA FOR INDIVIDUALS

Individuals can access their health information via TEFCA

Almost everyone needs to access their own health information—or that of a loved one—over time. The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement^{SM} (TEFCA^{SM}) will make it easier for an individual's health information to be appropriately and securely shared online.

TEFCA will reduce the burden many patients experience as they navigate the health care system and seek to be sure that they, their doctors, and their caregivers have the right information at the right time.

What is TEFCA?

TEFCA FOR EXECUTIVES

You may have heard that TEFCA is now live

This means that the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement[SM] for sharing health information is operational and exchange is happening every minute. TEFCA[SM] supports new and familiar exchange purposes, enabling a multitude of use cases and driving innovation.

TEFCA provides an efficient vehicle to send, receive, and query for standardized electronic health information from a broad array of participants across the nation.
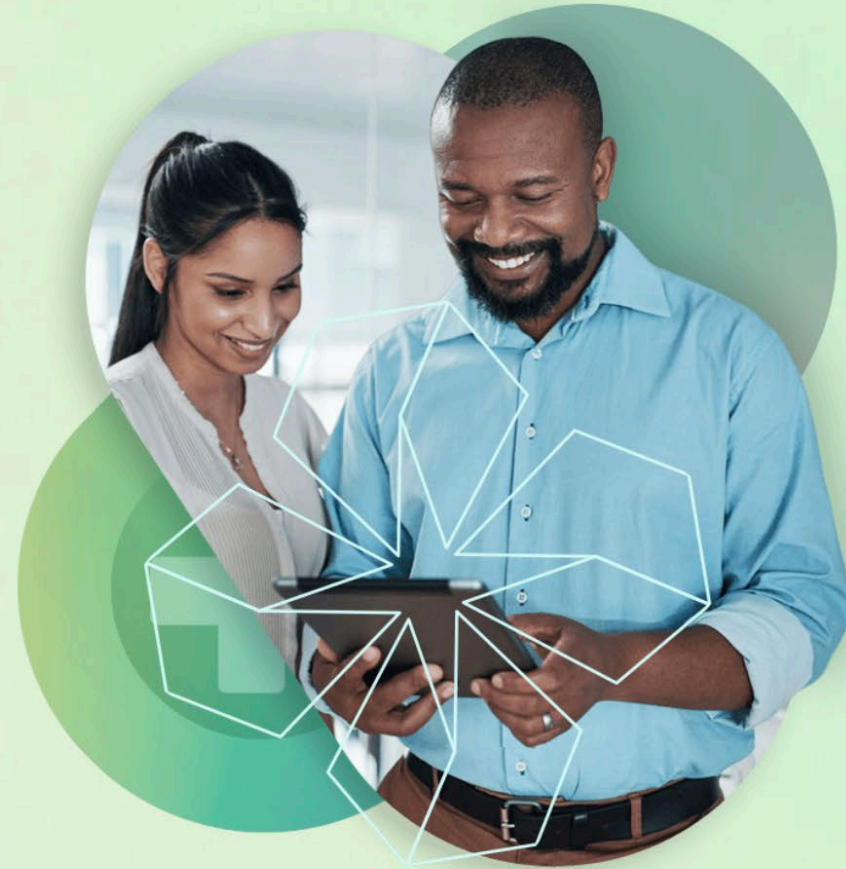
TEFCA AND FHIR

HL7 FHIR is the latest addition to TEFCA Exchange

The draft Common Agreement (CA) v2.0 and draft Qualified Health Information Network^{TM} (QHIN^{TM}) Technical Framework (QTF) V2.0 enable use of FHIR Release 4 for all use cases. Updated implementation Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will also specify how to use FHIR for specific uses.

Once these documents are finalized, Participants and Subparticipants will be able to use Facilitated FHIR to exchange data if they want to. Facilitated FHIR is designed to allow organizations to conduct transactions directly with other participants in TEFCA exchange without having a prior connection in place. It is facilitated by usage of the RCE^{TM} Directory Service for scalable endpoint discovery, the Common Agreement for consistent policy requirements, and the QTF and relevant SOPs for TEFCA-specific technical requirements.

While the initial discovery of where a patient's data resides will be done through a query to their QHIN, TEFCA exchange can be done directly with FHIR-enabled organizations that have listed a FHIR endpoint in the RCE Directory Service. This will allow organizations with FHIR capabilities to do specific queries targeted to the data they need in support of the TEFCA use cases defined.

RCE Resource Library

TEFCA is a multifaceted, living framework that enables seamless and secure nationwide exchange of health information.

GETTING STARTED
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Below is a guide to the Common Agreement, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), technical documents, and other resources that make up TEFCA's rules of the road. Start your journey to next generation interoperability here.

https://rce.sequoiaproject.org/rce-resources-new/

Additional Resources:
https://www.healthit.gov/tefca

All Events Registration and Recordings:

https://rce.sequoiaproject.org/community-engagement/

Next Monthly Informational Call:
April 16 at noon ET

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Questions & Answers

For more information:
rce.sequoiaproject.org