

COMMUNICATION INTEROPERABILITY PROJECT ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this paper is to describe the objectives, deliverables, and organization of the 2002 WEDi / AFEHCT Health Care Communications Interoperability Work Group.

Purpose of the Project

This project will publish specifications of a reasonable set of standard communications security and interoperability methods for communicating HIPAA standard EDI transactions. The methods will be defined directly or by reference with technical specificity. They will meet HIPAA security rules and the 11/24/98 HCFA Internet Security Policy (HISP-98), and they will use open, non-proprietary technology.

Title of Deliverables

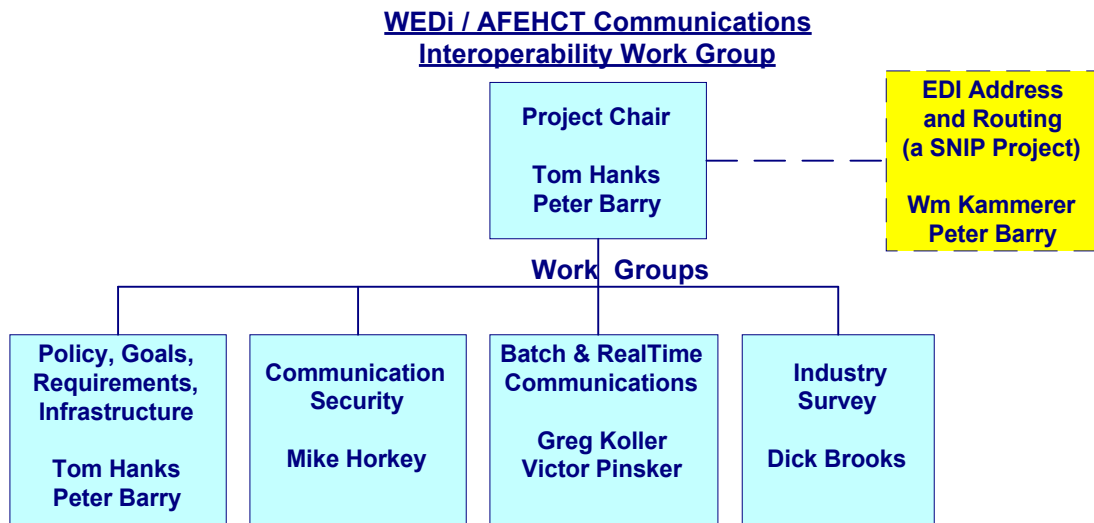
The specifications will be published under the following title:

**Health Care EDI Communications
Interoperability Specifications
Section**

Some specifications will be completed and ready for use before others. For example, the security specifications required for use of the Internet will take longer to develop than other interoperability specifications. Consequently, project deliverables will be a series of completed publications, called sections.

Organization of Project

The project will be organized into several workgroups as described below. Membership and participation in the workgroups is open. Each workgroup will have 2 or 3 co-chairs.



1. **AFEHCT & WEDi.** The project is organized jointly by WEDi and AFEHCT under the organizational auspices of WEDi. The boards of both WEDi and AFEHCT must approve all final documents before publication.
2. **Project Chairs.** Responsible for general administration and scheduling of the project and for final editing of publications.
3. **Workgroups**
 - a. **Policy Workgroup.** This workgroup is responsible for defining the following:
 - Policies and business issues
 - Goals of the project
 - Business and technical requirements
 - Overall architecture and requisite infrastructure
 - b. **Security Workgroup.** The communications security workgroup is responsible for specifying a reasonable (small) set of security methods, consistent with HIPAA and HISP-98, for interoperability between health care EDI participants.
 - Methods will be specified according to the requirements of different communication connections, which initially appear to include:
 - Dial-in connection
 - Private IP network, including dial-in and dedicated connection
 - Internet
 - The most difficult issue to be addressed by this workgroup is entity authentication. One model is that this workgroup specifies session initiation that establishes identities, after which the communications workgroup below employs standard secure IP protocols. Other models may pertain as well.
 - c. **Communications Workgroup.** The Batch and Real-Time Communications workgroup is responsible for specifying a reasonable set of communications methods, consistent with HIPAA and HISP-98, for interoperability between health care EDI participants.
 - **Real-time EDI transaction specification.** Given authentication as specified by the security workgroup, the communications workgroup will define packaging and other specifications for transport of a standard EDI transaction for real-time or fast-response processing. This may be as simple as putting a single X12 transaction in a data field within a secure HTML form, or it may use other communications standards.

- **Batch EDI transaction specification.** The workgroup will define a reasonable set of packaging and other specifications for transport of a batch of standard EDI transactions. These specifications may include FTP, ebXML, EDIINT, or other methods to be determined by the workgroup.
- d. **Survey Workgroup.** The survey workgroup will conduct a series of surveys to investigate the technologies, policies, and practices currently in use by members of the healthcare community for secure exchange of EDI over the Internet and other networks.
- e. **EDI Address and Routing Workgroup.** This is an affiliated workgroup within the WEDi SNIP Business Issues group. Its conclusions will be a significant part of the Interoperability project.

Working Papers

Each workgroup will document interim findings in project working papers. To help coordination, working papers will employ a format similar to this paper and will be given document numbers and dates, such that a later date replaces an earlier date for the same document number. The papers will be written in Word. Charts will be developed using Visio and maintained as separate files, copied into Word documents. Filenames are document number followed by title of the paper (e.g. "1100 Project Organization").

Document numbers are assigned by each workgroup within the following series:

1000-1999	Project administration
2000-2999	Policy workgroup
3000-3999	Security workgroup
4000-4999	Communications workgroup
5000-5999	Survey workgroup
6000-6999	EDI Address and Routing workgroup

Scheduling and Sequence

1. Each workgroup will prepare a work plan, sequence, and estimated schedule.
2. The intention is to publish completed specifications as early as possible. To achieve this goal, the following sequence guideline is indicated:
 - Specifications for dial-in and private IP networks should be published without waiting for resolution of Internet open network and EDI address issues.
 - The security workgroup should address dial-in and private networks first.
 - Real-time and batch specifications should be developed in parallel by separate teams within the communications workgroup.