SCHIEx

Technical Frequently Asked Questions

(Ongoing Summary of Questions and Responses from SCHIEx Technical Webcasts and Consultations)

1. Question: To satisfy HIPAA requirements, is there an audit log entry created when a patient's information is provided through the Exchange to a Participant?

Answer: Yes. All PHI transmissions are logged to the audit log in that the exchange tracks that a document related to a specific patient was sent to a specific Participant. The log will track that a document was transmitted but will have no record of the specific PHI contained in the document.

The receiving system is then responsible to maintain a more granular record of the end user that had access to that document and the PHI. The analogy is that of a fax that is transmitted. SCHIEx can track that a fax was sent from point A to point B but once the fax arrives at point B, who has access to the document becomes the responsibility of point B, the receiving party.

Please also see related question located on page 5 of the "Responsiveness Summary Regarding Public Comments Received on the SCHIEx Governance Documents" under the "SCHIEx Policy Manual" tab on the "For Providers" page at www.schiex.org.

2. Question: What happens if a patient is sent by a Participant via a patient identity feed and the patient does not match up with any other patient known to the Exchange?

Answer: The patient (Patient X) is still accepted by the PIX manager and registered but the record is not linked to any others at that point in time. The participating site that sent that patient record can still register clinical documents for that patient (Patient X).

Should a site try to register documents for a patient for which a patient identify feed was not originally sent or a case where the identity feed failed, an unknown patient error response is sent by the Exchange (in compliance to the standards) so the site is aware of the failure to register the document.

3. Question: What parameters does the patient matching depend on?

Answer: Patients from various sources are linked based on demographic attributes like first and last name, date of birth, gender, social security number etc. The SCHIEx record locator service protects an individual's privacy and security concerns by using "blindfolded" record linking. Under this blindfolded approach, the likeness or similarity of patient demographics are used to match a patient's medical records from different providers, not the patient's actual demographic information.

Please refer to the "Core Services (RLS)" section of the "SCHIEx Operational Plan" document for more detailed information around record linking. Additional information may also be found in: "Identity Management - An overview of the CareEvolution RHIO Technology Platform's Identity Management (record linking) service."

4. Question: What is the timeline for the on-ramping process?

Answer: The actual time it takes the provider to technically prepare for connectivity is highly variable and depends on many factors such as whether there is already support for IHE profiles within the provider EMR; whether it requires an upgrade; whether there is just one system or multiple that have to be integrated before connecting etc. Once Step1, which is the basic NIST testing and interface testing (which simply confirm whether the edge systems are standards conformant), is complete for a system, we should be able to move through the rest of the process quickly. While there will be variables such as the number of providers seeking on-ramping within a given time period, we will process applications on a first come-first serve basis. We anticipate the technical process taking 4 elapsed weeks after the NIST sandbox testing is completed. The time taken to execute legal agreements and other policy requirements will vary depending on the organization.

5. Question: Is VPN required to access SCHIEx?

Answer: No. SCHIEx is built using open technology standards that fully comply with the specifications established by the NHIN and IHE. SCHIEx implements standards like the IHE Audit Trail and Node Authentication Integration (ATNA) profile that enable secure health information exchange over the Internet. The exchange uses bi-directional certificate-based node authentication for connections to and from each participant. TLS is used to secure communication between SCHIEx and the participant.

6. Question: Are there any bandwidth requirements for participating in SCHIEx?

Answer: While we have no minimum requirements for a connection to SCHIEx, the recommendation, at this point, is a connection with at least a 512Kbps download speed.

7. Question: Are you (SCHIEx) creating an end-user Training Manual?

Answer: The advantage of SCHIEx is that the end user has access to a more complete patient record. SCHIEx provides Participants with the standards-based "highway" to securely transport/share documents in a federated peer-to-peer model. The receiving systems (i.e. the Participant's EMRs connecting to the exchange and pulling down patient information) are responsible for deciding the best way to disseminate/present that information to the end user. We expect that this workflow will vary depending on the Participant and expect that the EMR vendors at each individual facility will provide this specific training.

8. Question: How does opt out work?

Answer: Once an opt out is executed by any Participant using either the Web-based tool provided in the SCHIEx Production Package or the Basic Patient Privacy Consent (BPPC) profile, the SCHIEx Xds.b Registry will no longer respond to any queries for information related to the patient.

9. Question: What will happen if demographic information is entered for the wrong patient or a similar error occurs at the Participant location, but is later corrected by the Participant?

Answer: When a participant updates demographic information via a Patient Identity feed with the A08 (update) option, the external record data is refreshed. So, if an error occurs and is later corrected, it will be corrected for the other SCHIEx Participants when they do a PIX query. All modifications are date/time stamped.

10. Question: How does document replacement work in a Participant's XDS/b Document Repository?

Answer: Previous documents in a Participant's XDS.b will be deprecated and replaced with current documents as specified in IHE XDS. However, the previous ones are never actually deleted from the repository.

11. Question: Will physicians be required to log into another system/separate application?

Answer: It depends on the system that is onboarding to SCHIEx and what it plans to do with the information it receives from the exchange. In general, it is expected that the connecting system will seamlessly integrate the additional patient information obtained from the exchange in to a report viewer or other clinical data viewers already available as part of their existing portfolio. Please discuss with your EMR vendors what this workflow and integration will look like in the application.

12. Question: What if we discover issues related to the connectivity process? What are our options?

Answer: We encourage you to reach out to a SCHIEx by sending an email to support@ors.sc.gov describing your issue or just requesting a technical call. The SCHIEx team will work with you to understand your specific issue and will be able to advice you regarding next steps.