



Records For Living, Inc. Responds to ONCHIT RFPs on Health Standards Harmonization and Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) Prototype

Records For Living, Inc. is committed to representing the interests of healthcare consumers in the creation of the Nationwide Health Information Network

Sudbury, Mass. (July 21, 2005) – Records For Living, Inc. has responded to two Requests for Proposals (RFPs) put forth by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in continued support of the government’s strategy to promote the implementation of health information technology.

Background

On April 27, 2004, President Bush issued an executive order calling for the widespread adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) and for the creation of the Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<http://www.hhs.gov/healthit>). The ONCHIT Framework for Strategic Action, outlining health care technology goals and strategies for the next decade, was released in July 2004 (<http://www.hhs.gov/healthit/documents/hitframework.pdf>).

In June 2005, building upon on the previous year’s strategic directives, HHS embarked on initiatives to coordinate public and private efforts aimed at harmonizing health interoperability standards and to fund prototypes and demonstrations of alternative approaches to a Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN). To achieve these goals, ONCHIT published four RFPs that address various aspects of health care interoperability (<http://www.hhs.gov/healthit/contracts.html>).

The ONCHIT RFPs emphasize the interoperability concerns that affect information exchange among healthcare providers, including doctors, hospitals, laboratories, and pharmacies. Initially, the government’s focus on the support of communications between businesses and consumers is expected to be limited.

Records for Living, Inc., has responded to two of the RFPs: one calling for the harmonization of health care standards and another soliciting the development of a NHIN. The company has proposed designs that meet the requirements of ONCHIT’s current directives and also support the extension of interoperability services to consumers.

Harmonizing Health IT Standards

Information exchange across systems requires the existence of a universal communication standard that specifies protocol, content, structure and rules governing the exchange. Existing health care standards, such as HL7, LOINC, ICD-9 and CPT do not ensure – or, in most cases, even permit -- interoperability. To address this problem, RFP ONCHIT-1 requests proposals to “develop, create prototypes for, and evaluate a process to harmonize industry-wide health IT standards development, maintenance and refinements over time.” (<http://fs1.ehs.gov/EPSTData/HHS/Synopses/4607/Reference-Number-ONCHIT-1/ONCHITFinalRFP-STANDARDSHARMONIZATION.pdf>)

Records For Living, Inc. proposes a standards harmonization approach that uses tools, techniques and processes based on a secure metadata-driven foundation, with support for reporting, auditing, versioning, and rich transformation semantics in a way that will promote the development of information interchange among current systems and support the addition of new standards for the exchange of personal electronic health record information.

“A number of efforts are underway to create standards that support the transmission of personal health information directly to consumers,” says Simone Pringle, President and Founder of Records for Living, Inc. “We propose to leverage mature database and data warehousing solutions in an innovative approach that will support both existing and developing standards. Including support for consumer-focused standards should not be an after-thought, but rather a natural extension of the harmonization process.”

Developing a Nationwide Network

RFP ONCHIT-3 requests proposals to “develop and evaluate prototypes for a NHIN architecture maximizing the use of existing resources such as the Internet to achieve widespread interoperability among health care software applications, particularly EHRs. Another key objective is to spur technical innovation for nationwide sharing of health information in patient care and public health settings.” (<http://fs2.ehs.gov/EPSTData/HHS/Synopses/4607/Reference-Number-ONCHIT-3/ONCHITFinalRFP-NationwidePrototype1.pdf>)

Records for Living, Inc., has responded to this RFP with an innovative, yet practical, solution for an NHIN prototype. “Our architecture supports national standards, but with localized control,” notes Pringle. “Information will be securely and privately accessible across the entire NHIN, and yet the architecture will put as much responsibility and control as possible in the hands of the Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs). This model supports further downstream delegation to sub-RHIOs, certified provider systems, and, eventually, consumers themselves through patient portals or similar mechanisms.”

Technical portions of Records For Living’s responses are posted on the company’s website: <http://www.recordsforliving.com/ProductsAndServices/ONCHIT/>. The architectural models documented in these responses represent mechanisms that Records

For Living offers its partners as the foundation for the implementation of consumer-friendly RHIOs.

About Records For Living, Inc.

Records For Living, Inc. is a pioneer in the personal health information management industry and is focused on providing solutions to a broad range of health care issues.

Records For Living's HealthFrame™ product is an innovative solution to personal health management. The HealthFrame™ concept mirrors that of the popular and user-friendly personal financial planning and management software tools that have been used successfully by consumers for years. HealthFrame™ supports all aspects of health and wellness management and allows consumers to track their health and care, improving the quality of the health services they receive.

Records For Living, Inc. also provides professional services to our health care provider partners to support the improved exchange of medical record information between providers and patients.

Records For Living, Inc. may be reached on the World Wide Web at <http://www.RecordsForLiving.com> or via email at info@RecordsForLiving.com.