



Delivering Information for Better Care

What Is ELINCS?

ELINCS is the EHR-Lab Interoperability and Connectivity Specification. It standardizes the formatting and coding of electronic messages exchanged between clinical laboratories and ambulatory electronic health record (EHR) systems.

ELINCS is an example of a clinical data standard—an agreed upon set of rules that allow information to be shared and processed uniformly, thereby providing a common language for patient care. Adopting these standards helps providers deliver the right care by making information available at the right time.

What Are the Barriers to Widespread Adoption?

Unlike many other industries, such as banking, data standards in health care are not uniformly available or adopted. Most health information is shared in an antiquated, paper-based system that cannot capture important clinical information, such as reminders or other prompts to doctors. Although laboratory test results are generated electronically, the lack of standards means that a new set of agreements about how results from each lab can be delivered to each EHR in the community need to be brokered every time, driving more cost and inefficiency into the health care system.

CHCF's Involvement in Developing ELINCS

In collaboration with electronic medical record vendors, commercial laboratories, government agencies, professional associations and nonprofit organizations, the California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF) sponsored the development of ELINCS. CHCF supported providers from 10 California health care organizations to test and enhance the standard.

ELINCS has been adopted by HL7, the internationally recognized standards development organization for health information. HL7 will assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and further development of ELINCS.

Key Benefits of ELINCS

- **Improved practice efficiency** -- eliminating the need for physicians or office staff to manually enter lab data, scan paper lab reports, or track down missing results.
- **Easier installation of EHRs** -- dramatically reducing the time and cost required to build electronic interfaces between lab information systems and EHRs.
- **Improved quality of care** -- allowing clinicians to compare results over time, graph trends, identify patients requiring interventions, and prevent unsafe or unnecessary treatment.
- **More efficient reporting between labs and multiple EHR systems** -- allowing reporting to all physician practices in a community instead of just a few.
- **Faster delivery of test results in a reliable and cost-effective method** -- preventing errors and reducing cost.

For more information, visit www.elincs.org or phone 510.238.1040.