NHS publishes Five Year Forward View

NHS England published on 24 October its Five Year Forward View (5YFV), setting out the direction of the NHS for the next five years and explaining how it will change. Notably, the 5YFV focuses on accelerating innovation in delivering care, new care models and exploiting 'the information revolution.'

"The 5YFV is very clear that we are living in a digital age and that the NHS has to embrace this fully," said Mike Farrar, member of PwC's Health Industries Oversight Board. "This brings huge opportunities to revolutionise access to care and the nature of care delivery, in particular using technology to put patients more in control of their own care."

A National Information Board has been set up, featuring, among others, clinical science and public health bodies. The Board will this year release roadmaps on, *inter alia*, NHS accredited apps and electronic health records that patients can access. "The 5YFV simply can't be delivered without empowering patients - giving them more control over their own care and more power over decisions taken on resources or governance of the service," adds Farrar.

Northern Ireland consults on eHealth and Care Strategy

Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) launched a consultation on the proposed eHealth and Care Strategy for Northern Ireland (NI) on 8 October. The Strategy is a key part of the transformation and modernisation plan for health and social services in Northern Ireland through the use of technology.

"The Strategy is a five year plan on how to use technology to deliver improvements in health and social services in NI," said Clare Bates, Partner at Carson McDowell. "The end goal is to use technology to improve systems and service delivery, whilst at the same time allowing people to make more decisions about their health and wellbeing and expand the way that information is shared in the health and social care system. It is achievable but much rests on the level of investment."

The Strategy is the last of three strategic documents published by the HSCB: 'Transforming Your Care' (2011), 'Quality 2020' (2011), and the strategic framework for 'Making Life Better' (2014), which sets out the goals and challenges to overcome in order to transform the system to a patient-centric model of care. The proposals put forward in the Strategy include: providing online access to personal health records; developing mobile apps to support healthcare professionals; promoting the use of telemonitoring and telecare; developing a Social Media Alternative Communications Plan to make the most of social media and smartphone technology; continuing to build on the electronic records system; digitalising processes and records to enable information to be shared; and developing links between information

systems and analysis to suggest personalised preventative care.

"The Strategy is important for the future of healthcare in NI," adds Bates. "Health and social care in NI is facing challenges with people living longer, widespread reporting of services under pressure and an expectation from users that it should be easier to seek out information about themselves and make decisions about their own health and wellbeing." However continues Bates, "The need to improve services has to be balanced against what the Strategy describes as 'scarce HSC resources.' The Strategy also recognises that effective leadership and a shared governance structure is required across health and care organisations and that public and staff are concerned that sharing information digitally may be less secure and increase the risk of a breach of confidentiality."

US ONC releases latest draft of its HIT interoperability roadmap

The US Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) revealed on 15 October the latest draft of its interoperability roadmap, which presents a ten year plan towards a 'nationwide interoperable health IT [HIT] infrastructure.'

"The roadmap will provide guiding principles and timelines for achieving interoperability, but just as importantly, the development process is enabling a conversation among healthcare providers, consumers, technology companies and federal and state

regulators about how to get health IT working to improve care and empower patients," said Marcy Wilder, Partner and Leader of the Global Privacy Practice at Hogan Lovells.

The draft outlines milestones at three, six and ten years; for example after three years providers and patients should be able to send, receive and access health information via web portals. Five building blocks, including certification and privacy, form the roadmap's backbone. "The roadmap is intended to build

incrementally from current technology, and create a workable system that takes into account the exploding use of eHealth and other technologies," said Joan Antokol, Managing Partner of Park International LLC.

"There is an urgent need today for greater interoperability in order for the triple aims of higher quality, lower costs and better access to be achieved," said Steven Gravely, Health Care Practice Leader at Troutman Sanders. "A decade is forever in healthcare."