

# Health Information Compliance Alert

## Toolkit: Boost Your eHealth Vernacular with 9 Must-Know Definitions

### Don't be fooled by vendors that 'cloud wash' their products.

Health IT continues to impact both practice management and the delivery of care in ways providers never thought possible. And as the stakes get higher, it's critical that you review new protocols and platforms to help your patients and also protect your bottom line.

Keep informed with this list of hot topics and buzz words currently trending in HIT:

**1. Application Programming Interfaces (APIs):** In a nutshell, APIs allow different software programs to talk to each other by "translating" data. These "messengers" of HIT "help healthcare providers share patient information with other providers securely and efficiently," informs an Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) fact sheet on APIs. Currently, the feds advise - and will require for Medicare Part B payment in 2019 - practices to upgrade to 2015 editions of CEHRT with better APIs.

**2. Clinical Business Intelligence:** Many larger healthcare organizations analyze their compiled data to better serve their patients. Clinical analysts examine the information and then apply it to improve patient outcomes. This is called clinical business intelligence.

**3. Clinical Data Repository (CDR):** "A CDR is a real-time database that consolidates data from a variety of clinical sources, such as an electronic medical record or a laboratory system, to present a full picture of care a patient has received," indicates CMS in its July 2018 list of health IT definitions.

**Remember:** Part B clinicians reporting measures in the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) have the option to submit data to a CDR. Many of these public health measures bump up providers overall score with bonus points for CDR utilization.

**4. Cloud Native:** This refers to cloud applications that are designed to be implemented by cloud service providers (CSPs) for cloud-specific platforms.

**5. Cloud Washing:** Not all EHR vendors and IT business partners are on the up-and-up. Because cloud computing is a popular and profitable service, many vendors want to get in on the action. Some suggest their products are somehow related to cloud services, but they're not - that's cloud washing.

**6. Federal Health Architecture (FHA):** The FHA is the conglomeration of several different federal departments and agencies that work together to improve, impart, and govern health IT solutions, compliance, and security. Collaborators include the HHS, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Department of Energy (DOE), notes ONC guidance.

**7. Information Blocking:** When clinicians, hospitals, and EHR vendors "knowingly and unreasonably interfere with the exchange or use of electronic health information," they are impeding the delivery of patients' data and possibly interfering with care and medical decision making, suggests the ONC.

**Important:** Eligible clinicians and hospitals must attest, using new reporting requirements, that they are not engaging in the practice - or risk financial penalties, according to CMS guidance issued at the end of last year and reiterated in recent proposals.

**8. Patient-Generated Health Data (PGHD):** When patients or family members bring information from their personal

health records (PHR) to assist physicians and supplement existing data for analysis, they are utilizing PGHD. With the increased focus on patient-centered medicine, it should come as no surprise that the utilization of CEHRT that allows for patients to upload their PGHD is a MIPS measure.

**9. Software as a Service (SaaS):** This "on-demand" style of software is utilized when a cloud service provider (CSP) hosts and delivers the applications to the clinician or organization as a service via the internet or a network.