

SFY2021-22 State Budget Hearing (Health): February 25, 2021
Statewide Health Information Network for NY (SHIN-NY)
Submitted by the New York eHealth Collaborative

The New York eHealth Collaborative (NYeC) thanks the Health Committee chairs and members for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the SFY 2021-2022 Executive Budget. NYeC is charged with leading and coordinating the Statewide Health Information Network for NY, commonly referred to as the SHIN-NY.

The SHIN-NY is a network of connected regional health information exchanges, Qualified Entities (QEs), which collectively form a data sharing enterprise that serves the entire State of New York. The SHIN-NY QEs are Bronx RHIO, HealtheConnections, HEALTHeLINK, Healthix, Hixny, and Rochester RHIO. The SHIN-NY helps improve healthcare and reduce costs by ensuring that providers, public health departments, health plans, and other critical care team members have the clinical information they need, whenever and wherever they need it.

NYeC is pleased the proposed Executive Budget includes level funding for the SHIN-NY at \$30 million. We respectfully urge you maintain that funding in the final enacted budget to ensure continuation of vital services to the State's healthcare community.

State and federal investment in this network has allowed us to provide certain core services for free or low cost to healthcare professionals, ensuring that they have the information they need to deliver informed care regardless of which part of the health system(s) they are a part of or what electronic health record they utilize.

The network has also supported the healthcare and public health community during the COVID-19 pandemic with tools that many other states across the country lacked. Throughout the pandemic, the SHIN-NY has consistently delivered support in several ways:

COVID-19 Test Result Information & Alerts to Providers

- The QEs receive COVID-19 lab test data and send alerts to providers in their communities notifying them about their patients' test results. This is often the most direct, or only, way providers learn that their patients have been tested and/or are positive for COVID-19 and directly supports a reduction in hospital surge because it allows providers to manage low- or asymptomatic patients at home in the community.

Access to SHIN-NY Data for State & Local Health Departments

- Access to data within the SHIN-NY supports local public health departments, especially with supplemental information for notification and contact tracing when other data sources are incomplete, as well as supports their ability to conduct comprehensive case investigations. Additionally, the data has helped inform the State Department of Health as they worked to learn more about this new virus and its profile, including data about relevant comorbidities, potential need for ICU beds or ventilators, impact of certain treatments, and more.

Ongoing Exploration of Additional Forms of Assistance

- The network is currently exploring how to integrate vaccination data from the State's immunization registry, and how the SHIN-NY could reduce some of the pandemic-related reporting burdens on hospitals, as two examples.

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, usage of the SHIN-NY was shown to help reduce healthcare spending by up to \$200 million annually, which is a very conservative estimate. These savings come from reductions in duplicative tests, avoidable hospitalizations, and unnecessary ED visits. If the SHIN-NY were fully utilized those savings could increase to \$1 billion annually.

The Executive Budget includes provisions with direct implications to the network. NYeC was pleased that the proposed budget would require SHIN-NY connectivity or interoperability for telehealth, which is consistent with recommendations we made to the Reimagine Commission. The Health and Mental Hygiene Article VII bill would also require establishment of a single, statewide form of SHIN-NY consent. This proposal is generally aligned with the direction of existing efforts by the SHIN-NY Policy Committee to modernize and streamline consent policy and process while maintaining patient choice. We expect that significant time and coordination will be needed to ensure smooth implementation.

Additionally, the proposed Public Protection and General Government Article VII bill includes data accountability and transparency legislation. The SHIN-NY complies with existing New York State and federal consent and privacy laws which are extensive. Our network is also HITRUST certified for security. We agree that new legal protections are needed in areas not already covered by HIPAA, HITECH and Gramm-Leach-Bliley, and other existing privacy protection laws.

NYeC thanks you for your review and consideration of this testimony and looks forward to the opportunity for continued dialogue with you about any of these issues.