

# Focus Group: Interoperability

Topic: What is Interoperability

04/02/2024

**Indian Health Service**  
Health Information Technology  
Modernization Program



# Zoom Meeting Guide

## Meeting Technical Notes

If you lose connectivity during the session, simply re-click on the **Join** link to re-access meeting

If you experience technical difficulties, please send an **Email** to [Modernization@ihs.gov](mailto:Modernization@ihs.gov) to speak with a **Coordinator**

Please  
**MUTE**



Please  
Use Chat  
Feature



### Microphone

- Click to mute or unmute yourself
- Red slash indicates you are on mute

### Participants

Click this to access the participant list

### Chat

Click to provide input during the meeting

### Camera

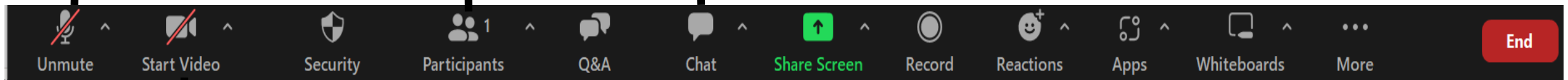
- Click to turn camera on or off
- Red slash indicates camera is off

### Share Screen

Click this to share a presentation/document or your desktop screen

### Reactions

Click to select an emoji to share in the meeting instead of speaking



# Disclaimer



Focus Groups (FGs) inform and support decisions and governance of the Health Information Technology (IT) Modernization Program. FGs are NOT decision-making bodies and at NO time will focus groups provide consensus, recommendations or advice to the Agency that would trigger Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App. § 1-16 additional legal requirements.

# Meeting Courtesies

- Participation in the focus group is voluntary and has no term limits
- Be prompt, be prepared, and be ready with constructive feedback
- Share constructive individual feedback via engagement during the meeting
- Communicate with grace and respect for all participants
- Be engaged, listen attentively and actively, share ideas, ask questions, contribute
- It's all right to refrain from discussing specific topics if you are uncomfortable
- All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers
- Maintain others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group
- Any topics or ideas not directly related to the current agenda will be 'promptly parked' and revisited at an appropriate time



# Welcome & Introductions

Dave Zimmerman - *Interoperability Focus Group  
Facilitator*

Charles Cross - *Engineering Branch, DHITMO*

Bobby Villines - *HIT Interoperability and Health  
Information Exchange Manager*



# Agenda

## Purpose

The Focus Group will help the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to understand the strategies used by other Federal agencies, Tribes, and Urban Indian Organizations to modernize their Health IT capabilities resulting in performance changes in healthcare delivery. The participants from the Interoperability Focus Group will inform decisions regarding organizational readiness, planning, and implementation.

## Agenda

- Introduction
- Topic 1: Interoperability
- Topic 2: Challenges and Lessons Learned
- Closing Remarks

## Desired Outcomes

- Shared understanding of what Interoperability means across all I/T/U EHR systems
- Data collection from past interoperability issues FG members have experienced

# Health IT Modernization Guiding Principles



**DESIGN** solutions that deliver culturally appropriate care, quality, safety and improved patient outcomes



**PARTNER** across I/T/U for collaborative decision-making that is fully informed by clinical and business users in the field



**EMPHASIZE** usability and human-centered design



**CONFIGURE** solutions to meet organizational requirements with minimal customization



**ENGAGE** patients in their health journey through improved patient access



**UTILIZE** recognized best practices across clinical and business processes



**ADOPT** enterprise technology solutions that support continuity of care



**PROVIDE** timely and complete communication, training and tools to support a successful deployment

# Meeting Guidelines



This is an opportunity to **improve the system and tool** to support the patient's and healthcare team's utilization of a new electronic health record.

Your **input** is important and provides valuable information and understanding the end-user needs necessary to support the modernization efforts.

*Circular 22-06: Executive Steering Committee Charter: Paragraph B. "At no time will the focus groups provide consensus recommendations or advice to the Agency." If not upheld, the **Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)** may be implicated, triggering additional legal requirements.*



# Focus Group Kickoff Highlights

*February 2024 Focus Group Summary*



- 18 Participants from 7 different I/T/U's
- Many of the participants are working with different EHRs with different challenges
- Many of the participants have unique experiences in migrating to a new EHR, which brings a lot of knowledge to IHS so we can learn from your lessons learned
- The insights and information that was provided will help IHS in making better decisions and was very appreciated



Topic 1:  
*What is  
Interoperability?*



# What is Interoperability?



- Interoperability refers to the ability of different information technology systems and software applications within healthcare to seamlessly exchange and use electronic health information
- This includes patient health records, test results, medication histories, treatment plans, and other relevant medical data. Interoperability enables healthcare providers, patients, and other authorized stakeholders to access and share health information securely and efficiently across various healthcare settings, such as hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies, and other healthcare facilities


# Key Aspects

- Data Exchange Standards
- Semantic Interoperability
- Technical Infrastructure
- Patient Identity Management
- Privacy and Security
- Workflow Integration
- Patient Engagement





# Topic 1 Discussion & Questions

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the middle ground, surrounded by dense green and yellowing trees. In the background, rolling hills are visible under a sky filled with soft, grey clouds. The foreground is dominated by the branches and leaves of trees, some with vibrant autumn colors like orange and brown, while others are still green. A large, white, semi-transparent circle is centered over the image, containing the text.

Topic 2:  
*Challenges  
and Lessons  
Learned*



# Topic 2 Discussion & Questions

# References



- IHS Health Modernization webpage:  
<https://www.ihs.gov/hit/>





# Planning for Next Meeting

Dave Zimmerman - *Interoperability Focus Group*  
Facilitator



# Next Scheduled Focus Group Meeting

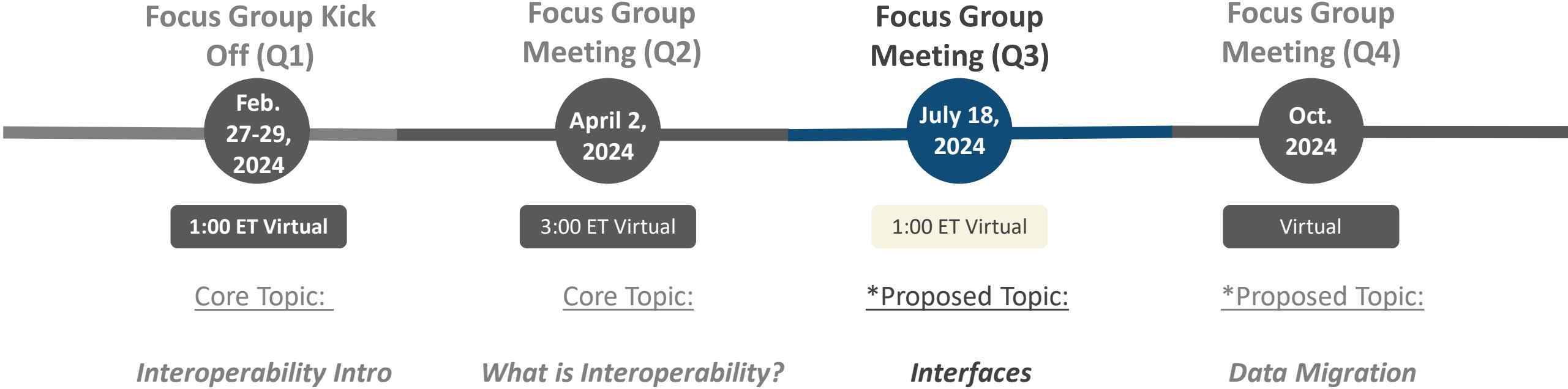
- 07/18/2024, 1:00 – 2:30 PM Eastern Time
- Proposed Topic:
  - Interfaces

## Questions?

- Submit Topic Requests to [Modernization@ihs.gov](mailto:Modernization@ihs.gov)

# Upcoming 2024 Focus Group Sessions

Each Focus Group session is held every 3 months (quarterly)



*\*Subject to change based on participation*



# Upcoming Engagements

Dave Zimmerman - *Interoperability Focus Group*  
Facilitator

# Statement of Interest

The IHS desires to learn which tribal and urban health care entities have an interest in becoming a tenant on the shared system.

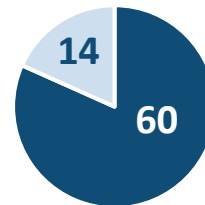
**Opportunity** for Tribes and urban Indian organizations to formally express interest in participating in the IHS enterprise EHR solution



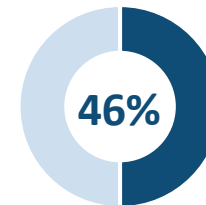
The IHS shared a Statement of Interest form where tribal and urban health care entities can indicate their interest in partnering with the IHS on the shared enterprise solution. The Statement of Interest is **NON-BINDING**, and will connect partners to support system configuration, organizational assessment and implementation planning.

The Statement of Interest was attached to a Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader letter published on June 29, 2023.

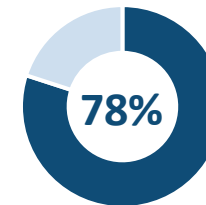
The IHS has received **74** Statement of Interest documents to date.



**60 tribal partners and 14 urban Indian organizations** have submitted a Statement of Interest to date



**46%** already use commercial health IT solutions other than or alongside RPMS



**78%** of respondents desire to implement **“early”** in the Modernization Program







**As of February 29, 2024**

# 2024 TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND URBAN CONFER

with the Health IT Modernization Program

Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer (TC/UC) events provide an opportunity to work with our partners to connect technology, business systems, and data to help providers and patients make informed decisions to improve care and health outcomes across Indian Country.

Scan or click the QR codes to register

 <p><b>MAY 09</b> <small>*VIRTUAL</small></p>	<p><b>DEPLOYMENT AND COHORT PLANNING</b></p>	
 <p><b>AUG 08</b> <small>*VIRTUAL</small></p>	<p><b>MULTI-TENANT DOMAIN CONSIDERATIONS</b></p>	
 <p><b>NOV 07</b></p>	<p><b>SITE READINESS AND TRAINING</b></p>	

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or by following us on social media



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