5.9 NHIN Gateway Function

One of the core functions will be to act as a gateway to the NHIN for Community HIEs. This does not imply that other HIEs operating within North Carolina are barred from becoming an NHIE if they qualify. Although the mechanism does not exist today, it is expected that the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the National Coordinator for Healthcare IT (ONC) will establish standards that HIEs must meet to become and remain a Certified NHIE, that is, an HIE that has been certified by the ONC to be a registered member of the NHIN and thus designated as an NHIE.

5.10 Patient Identity Management

Patient Identity Management is a key requirement for any HIE. Patient Identity Management is the ability to ascertain a distinct, unique identity for an individual (a patient), as expressed by an identifier that is unique within the scope of the exchange network, given characteristics about that individual such as his or her name, date of birth, gender, address or prior addresses, and identifiers such as medical record numbers or driver's license number. By Q1, 2010, the Governance Body and applicable workgroups will establish policies for performing deterministic matching of patient identities, such as confidence intervals for asserting a matched identity. These policies will include how ambiguous matches are handled, and how erroneous data can be corrected in the statewide MPI.

5.11 Identity Proofing

The Governance Body of North Carolina will determine the policies and procedures specific to a patient's ability to access to their own healthcare information and potentially the information of others for whom they act as a "care manager", through the NC HIE, using a PHR or similar application. The NC HIE must adopt policies describing the requirements for patients to be identity proofed before being granted access to the NC HIE. A similar policy should describe the requirements for identity-proofing clinicians and other users of the HIE, though this is usually less problematic as the employers of these types of users can be expected to have procedures to verify the credentials of an individual before granting them access to systems containing patient records. It will also be necessary to support a de-credentialing process when a provider/employee changes status.

Access Control/User Management

The purpose of an HIE is to allow a set of individuals we refer to as "users" to access healthcare information about another set of individuals referred to as "patients." These are not disjointed sets of individuals, since: a) doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers ("users") may also be patients, and b) patients who are not healthcare providers have rights to access their own healthcare information (and those of their children/dependents), and may be granted rights to access information about others whose care they manage (such as an elderly parent). In this context, the person accessing the information would be considered a "user."