

CDC looks to bring its clinical guidance into the digital age

Evan Sweeney

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has formed a new initiative focused on leveraging technology to get clinical guidelines in front of healthcare providers.

Through the initiative known as "Adapting Clinical Guidelines for the Digital Age," CDC officials are looking for feedback from clinicians, EHR and third-party app developers and public health agencies about the best ways to disseminate clinical guidelines. The agency plans to hold a public meeting with stakeholders the week of February 5, according to a [notice \(PDF\)](#) posted this week to the Federal Register.

The CDC plans to use information from that meeting to pilot test new processes for guideline development and implementation.

"Because there are multiple roles in developing and disseminating clinical guidelines, it is important to get a comprehensive understanding of the current challenges in translating guidelines in order to develop a standardized process for the future," the notice stated.

CDC spokesperson Melissa Brower told FierceHealthcare the initiative is "a natural extension" of an agencywide working group formed in 2016 looking at ways to ensure CDC guidance is used in practice.

Using technology to quickly get information to clinicians, particularly during public health emergencies, is an issue the CDC has highlighted as an ongoing challenge. At a December meeting hosted by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT, the CDC's Chesley Richards, M.D., who directs the Office of Public Health Scientific Service, said the Ebola outbreak led to "some soul-searching" about how the agency can improve clinical decision support.

Richards added that the CDC is especially interested in extracting data from EHRs to quickly identify outbreaks, while also limiting the reporting burden for physicians.