

TRUSTED AGENT UPDATE: COMMON LICENSURE APPLICATION FORM (CLAF) PILOT

The CLAF pilot involved a collaborative agreement between two organizations - the National Board of Medical Examiners and the Federation of State Medical Boards - to link their data repositories through a web services architecture that enables electronic compilation of data needed to complete the CLAF in near real time. This allows physicians in the three participating states (Kentucky, New Hampshire and Ohio) to apply for licensure on the web and to dramatically shorten and simplify the process of compiling the application form.

As of November 28th, 2810 MD and DO applicants in KY, NH or OH had registered with the Trusted Agent infrastructure, and 533 had used CLAF to submit completed applications without major problem. Thus far, the shortest time to complete the process of compiling, reviewing and delivering the completed application is eight minutes (as opposed to weeks or sometimes months in the previous paper-based process). Surveys of applicants have indicated that the system works well, and the Trusted Agent system is viewed as user-friendly and as providing timely results, while maintaining high levels of security and confidentiality. Further, since the use of the Federation Credentials Verification System (FCVS) allows pre-population of forms with data that have already been primary source verified, the physician does not have to actually fill out the application or gather paper documents and notarize them. This has been much appreciated since it substantially reduces the hassle factor. Satisfaction is also high among State Medical Board staff, because of the inconvenience and expense of paper handling, and also because auto-population of CLAF by the computer is much less error-prone than is physician self-entry.

Since this pilot has demonstrated initial “proof of concept” of the Trusted Agent vision, a decision was made by the NBME and FSMB to transition CLAF from developmental to operational status. Planning for further “tactical” development of CLAF and other related credentialing applications is now underway. In relation to operations and infrastructure, this will mean addition of full e-accounting and e-commerce capabilities to enable revenue streams to be collected automatically, and the ability to handle transactions asynchronously (for example if one of the component repositories is temporarily offline). On the program development side, several additional states are interested in using CLAF. Furthermore, since several other repetitive credentialing processes require much of the same data displayed in CLAF, the feasibility of using the Trusted Agent infrastructure to compile the necessary forms (e.g., for insurance credentialing, and institutional privileging) is being actively explored.

Planning for development of the Trusted Agent at a higher “strategic” level will fall into two main categories. The first is the addition of other functional applications (viz. compilations), such as eFolios. The second involves future governance, ownership, structure and business models of the Trusted Agent as a more distributed infrastructure with possible participation of other repositories.

Fig. Diagram Representing the Flow of Data for CLAF.

The process is initiated by the Medical Professional registering, and requesting submission of a licensure application in one of the three participating states (KY, NH and OH). The CLAF Data Compilation passes the request to the Hub, which is attached 24/7 to the necessary repositories. The hub calls the appropriate data elements and passes them to CLAF which compiles the application, shows it to the Medical Professional and sends it on to the correct State Medical Board. This process, including registration, has been completed in as little as 8 minutes.



An eFolio could be delivered in comparable fashion, with addition (from right to left) of: appropriate data repositories; a “plug-and-play” eFolio application in the Potential Data Compilation column; and designated third party viewers other than the State Medical Board authorized by the Medical Professional.

TRUSTED AGENT UPDATE: FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC VISION

As noted previously, the Trusted Agent vision involves building a safe infrastructure for real-time sharing of data across organizations in the House of Medicine, for a broad offering of different services. Key principles of the vision are that:

1. The infrastructure has instant access to all relevant data, but is “trusted” not to compile or reveal any data identified with an individual without their authorization
2. The infrastructure should not be owned nor controlled by any single data repository or organization

With completion of the first tactical Pilot (CLAF) and progress with delineating a second around a national eFolio framework, the initial vision for Trusted Agent still seems feasible. Now is a good time to consider the further development of the strategic vision. Extensive discussions with many organizations over the last three years indicate a reasonable level of comfort with the principles enunciated above. The logical next step is therefore to begin discussions with key potential partners beyond the founders (NBME and FSMB) in order to identify and resolve issues around business rules, reporting policies and procedures; and governance, ownership and structure. Conceptual approaches emerging from such discussions would be disseminated to, and deliberated by, other organizations and possible participants. Meetings of the National Alliance would represent one venue for this purpose.