HPD: the Healthcare Provider Directory

The IHE has had a profile for being able to test interoperability of healthcare provider directories. Just recently, IHE USA has started their own version, which should be compatible with the international IHE version, in addition to providing extra details to accommodate for US needs.

A Healthcare Provider Directory (HPD) is just what it sounds: it's a public directory of private health providers or of institution health providers. Or, as defined on the IHE document itself, *HPD directory structure is a listing of the following two categories of healthcare providers that are classified by provider type, specialties, credentials, demographics and service locations.*

- *Individual Provider – A person who provides healthcare services, such as a physician, nurse, or pharmacist.*
- *Organizational Provider – Organization that provides or supports healthcare services, such as hospital, Healthcare Information Exchange (HIE), Managed Care, Integrated Delivery Network (IDN), and Association.*

The goal is to have a standard for this directory, such that every group, individual, organization or institution who is maintaining one, could have the ability to share it, and make a more comprehensive and up to date version available.

why is this cool?

Honestly, i'm not 100% sure. Here's my thinking: Healthcare often needs to find locate a group of providers for care for referring patients to other specialists, or finding other doctors quickly in an emergency situation. Having a list (or many lists) of healthcare providers which can all be queried with the same language has a huge advantage.

For example, with a standardized protocol for the healthcare provider directory, there could be organizations which maintain a central directory by providing a simple user interface to download or update the directory, allowing other institutions to make use of the latest and most up to date version available.

What i'm not clear about, is who would be maintaining these directories, and what would their incentive be to adhere to this standard.

See Also

- http://ihe.net/uploadedFiles/Documents/ITI/IHE_ITI_Suppl_HPD.pdf