ASTP/ONC Announces Nationwide Behavioral Health Interoperability Pilots

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ASTP/ONC announced on February 2, 2026, the selection of nine nationwide pilot programs aimed at improving the interoperable exchange of behavioral health data. Launched in coordination with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the pilots will test real world implementation of the USCDI+ Behavioral Health dataset and the FHIR Behavioral Health Profiles Implementation Guide in varied behavioral health settings. A central focus of the pilots is addressing persistent barriers to behavioral health data sharing, including patient consent and heightened confidentiality requirements, while supporting more integrated behavioral and physical health care workflows.

The pilots will run through the end of 2026, with results expected to inform future updates to federal interoperability standards, implementation guidance, and ONC policy initiatives, including development of a Behavioral Health Information Resource anticipated in 2027. For providers, health IT developers, and health information exchanges, the initiative underscores continued federal emphasis on expanding electronic health information exchange for behavioral health while balancing privacy protections. As behavioral health interoperability remains a priority across multiple federal agencies, these pilots may signal the direction of future regulatory and enforcement activity in this area.