Tech to give doctors secure links to social care patients need

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What’s the news: A new technology subsidiary of the AMA is collaborating with the brains that helped create the Blue Button health records download functionality to help physicians easily send secure messages to doctors and other health and social care providers outside their practice or health system.

The subsidiary is AMA Innovations Inc., which will collaborate with Maryland-based Onyx Technology LLC to develop the secure messaging interoperability solution called FIRE Wire. It is based on the HL7 FHIR standard, the latter part of which is pronounced “fire.”

Why it’s important: Physicians’ ability to find—and effectively communicate with—the right physician or other health care or social services is often hampered by the lack of interoperability among the electronic systems they use to manage patient information, messaging and more.

FIRE Wire aims to help change that. The first test for the solution will be the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Community Living’s Innovative Technology Solutions for Social Care Referrals Challenge. If the AMA Innovations-Onyx entry is accepted, they will present a demo version of FIRE Wire. Up to three winners of $60,000 each will be named by June. A final prize winner, set for December, would get $140,000 or more, according to HHS.

The agency notes that “health IT developers are implementing innovative platforms that refer people to community resources, but they often create wall gardens in communities because they do not incorporate common standards and lack interoperability.”

“AMA Innovations' reach into medical community's unique knowledge-base and its expertise in delivering clinically relevant solutions, combined with Onyx’s unique expertise with FHIR, will allow us to deliver on the next level of health data sharing while complying with applicable privacy law and best practices,” said Tom Giannulli, MD, MS, vice president of AMA Innovations and chief medical information officer for the AMA Integrated Health Model Initiative.
“FIRE Wire is a lightweight, standards-based messaging and directory solution designed to facilitate secure, private, point-to-point patient information exchange and referrals across organizations,” added Dr. Giannulli. “With FIRE Wire, physicians and others will be able to easily establish trust and exchange messages and structured health information.”

Learn more: From the role of augmented intelligence (AI) in enhancing patient care to the use of health care apps and determining best practices for EHR adoption and usability, it’s vital that physicians have a say in the process. Find out how the AMA’s digital health leadership is ensuring the physician perspective is represented in the design, implementation and evaluation of new health care technologies.