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Compliance of EHR standards to be checked by e-regulator

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The ministry of health and family welfare is mulling of setting up a central authority or agency to check compliance of standards in electronic health record (EHR) ecosystem after due consultation with various stakeholders across the spectrum, health and family welfare secretary, Mr Lov Verma said at an ASSOCHAM event held in New Delhi on May 04, 2014.

"The ministry intends to set up a mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementationÂ and adherence to EHR standards and guidelines by various healthcare practitioners and vendors, thus we need to have an e-health authority which will be the regulator and will see that EHR standards areÂ adhered to," said Mr Verma while inaugurating an ASSOCHAM national summit on 'ICT in Healthcare: Changing Dimensions of Healthcare in India.'

The health ministry is also in the process of standardizing codification for health procedures in India and framing metadata and data standards (MDDS) for health sector, informed the secretary.

"MDDS will facilitate interoperability of e-governance applications by providing a common data information model for various stakeholders in the health system, national and state, public and private, to begin sharing meaningful information with each other in a timely manner."

He further informed that a detailed project report (DPR) of a mission mode project (MMP) for application of information and communication technology (ICT) in health sector is being prepared by the National Institute of Smart Governance (NISG) and the same will be submitted shortly.

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"The key approach in the health MMP will be to have an architecturally connected system in each state and thus integrating all the required components, whether they are covered in one system or many," said Mr Verma. "The broad focus areas for health MMP are public health, patient care, health administration and governance."

Talking about the role of ICT in healthcare sector, the secretary said, "With ICT adoption in health systems, we are hoping to achieve remote consultation, diagnosis and treatment through tele-medicine, facilitate collaboration and co-operation among healthcare providers."

He also said that ICT will bring a lot of transformation in healthcare service delivery as providers will have easier access to patient data and citizens will get the benefit in terms of better healthcare services.

Prevalence of paper based record keeping system, inaccessibility of healthcare information to citizens and patients, absence of effective and transparent grievance redressal system, absence of e-referral system, data duplication due to issues in data collection and reporting, shortage of doctors and other healthcare specialists, lack of timely and inaccurate information and analytics tools for decision making together with improper utilization of existing technology in healthcare are certain major challenges being faced in India vis-Ã?Â -vis health and IT, added the secretary.