The Gravity Project
Accelerating National Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Data Standards

The Gravity Project is a national open public collaborative and Health Level Seven International (HL7®) FHIR® Accelerator developing data standards to help reduce current barriers for documenting and exchanging social risk and protective factors within health care and other sectors. The Gravity Project convenes multi-stakeholder groups from across the health and human services sectors to develop and test consensus-based standards to facilitate individual-level social determinants of health (SDOH) data capture, exchange, and use across a variety of systems and settings of care and social services. The Gravity Project is agnostic to the screening tools (e.g., PRAPARE, AHC Screener, Health Leads) and data capture systems (e.g., electronic health record platforms, community-referral platforms, care coordination systems) used in the field to collect, exchange, and aggregate SDOH data.

Why capture social risk data in a standardized and structured way?
Research suggests that 80-90 percent of one’s health status is explained by social and environmental factors outside the clinical setting. Despite increased efforts to identify and address social determinants in U.S. health care settings, existing clinical terminologies and vocabularies are poorly equipped to capture related clinical activities. We need to identify, define, and agree on the core concepts related to clinically driven social care activities to adequately reflect those concepts.

Gravity Project Scope
The Gravity Project defines data standards for documenting and exchanging social care information in electronic health records (EHRs) and related systems across four clinical activities: screening, diagnosis, goal setting, and interventions. The Project deliverables are:

- Develop use cases that guide the development of standards to support SDOH data capture and exchange.
- Identify common data elements and associated value sets to support the use cases.
- Develop recommendations on how best to capture and group these data elements for interoperable electronic exchange.
- Collaborate with coding and terminology organizations to address coding gaps identified and apply for new codes.
- Develop, test, and ballot HL7 Fast Health Interoperability Resource (FHIR) Implementation Guide(s) based on the defined use cases and coded data sets.
- Develop Reference Implementation(s) to support real-world pilots and implementations.

Establishing Real-World Pilots
The Gravity Project is pleased to announce the Gravity Pilots Affinity Workgroup to serve as a peer-to-peer learning forum for entities interested in testing and piloting Gravity standards. The Gravity Project aims to foster a collaborative learning experience for Pilot partners and the community at large to share successes and ongoing challenges, seek partnerships, and learn together. The Gravity Pilots Affinity Workgroup addresses the need to openly discuss best practice for gathering individual level social care information in multiple settings, share that
information between stakeholders, and exchange referrals between organizations to address specific social risk needs, all with appropriate patient consent. In addition, Gravity Pilots Affinity Workgroup demonstrates how to share clinical data to support secondary purposes such as population health, quality, and research.

Gravity Pilots– How To Get Started

The Gravity Project is seeking broad participation—by clinical and social care providers, health IT vendors, digital technology innovators, health systems, payers, implementers, community-referral systems, and consumer/individual advocates—in Gravity pilots. Any interested party is welcome to participate in the Workgroup to help advance the maturity of the HL7 Social Determinants of Health Clinical Care FHIR Implementation Guide and validate individual level social care data elements developed to date.

Gravity Pilot participants will focus on a minimum of one primary use case. Each Pilot partner self-selects a use case depending on the identified capabilities and tier placement.

To be considered for participation in a Gravity Pilot, please complete the Pilot Interest form here.

The Gravity Pilots Affinity Workgroup meets the last Thursday of every month from 2:30 to 4:00 pm EST starting September 29, 2022. Meeting information is available on our Pilots Confluence Page.

To learn more about the Gravity Project, please visit thegravityproject.net or email us at gravityproject@emiadvisors.net.

The Gravity Pilots Affinity Workgroup is sponsored by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), IHE USA, and AARP.