7. Maintaining & Sustaining

This section contains information and support articles related to maintaining and sustaining an HIE.

To organize and support an integrated health information infrastructure, HIE networks must facilitate three important technical aspects of an infrastructure[1]:

1) **Architecture** - defining how everything "fits together" and provides a common understanding for creating and managing the components of the infrastructure;

2) **Transactions** - methods for transactions between information systems or the exchange of data and information;

3) **Interoperability** - methods for interoperability or the ability for receiving information systems to do something with the data or information exchanged.

The specific information systems and applications used in HIE are defined and managed by individual hospitals, physician offices, health systems, public health agencies, and payors. These include systems such as laboratory information systems, radiology information systems, emergency department information systems, etc. Where an HIE infrastructure can provide the most value is in defining the big picture and providing pathways that enable data exchange.

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[1] Health Information Exchange (2006), Edited by Brian E. Dixon, Page 109-113.