

2025

# ALASKA HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE SUMMIT

AUGUST 28



he<sup>l</sup>thEconnect  
ALASKA



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# ABOUT HEALTHECONNECT ALASKA

**We offer simple yet powerful solutions for providers and healthcare stakeholders so they can access the data they need, when they need it.**

healthEconnect Alaska is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to implementing services and technologies that ensure every Alaskan gets the right care, at the right time by providers who have the right information for the best possible outcomes. We work with the Alaska Department of Health to support over 150 locations across the state.

## DATA CONTRIBUTORS

15	Hospitals
30	Ambulatory Practices
3	Laboratory Systems
8	Behavioral Health Organizations
98	National Network Organizations

## SERVICES

healthEconnect offers access to various types of data, including lab results, radiology reports, discharge summaries, medical history and physicals, consultations, operative notes, and Alaska PDMP data, through a variety of tools and services.



### HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE (HIE) PORTAL:

Our patient data tools integrate with EMRs for cross-organization information sharing and offer alert systems to enhance patient safety and care coordination.



### PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTING:

Our efficient data solution streamlines mandated public health reporting, including Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR), vaccinations, infectious diseases, and more.



### SECURE FILE TRANSFER:

We offer secure file transfer solutions tailored for healthcare professionals, ensuring the safe and compliant exchange of protected health information.



### DIRECT SECURE MESSAGING:

Our HIPAA-compliant messaging enables secure sharing of protected information among care organizations, government agencies, and healthcare stakeholders.

## TYPES OF DATA

- Hospital admissions and discharges
- Laboratory orders & results
- Radiology reports
- Clinical encounter notes
- Medication history
- Demographics
- Social & behavioral data



Health information privacy and security is healthEconnect Alaska's top priority, using stringent industry-leading safeguards and policies.

## OUR REACH

healthEconnect serves Alaska's diverse healthcare ecosystem, including behavioral health, tribal, and other healthcare providers, hospitals, clinics, payers, health plans, and public health agencies.



**850K+**

Patient records in master patient index



**130+**

Organizations connected



**300+**

HIE portal users



**100+**

Organizations using data for public health reporting

## OUR GROWTH

As our network steadily expands, its value to each participant multiplies. In the past year:



Event notification traffic is approximately 2x higher.

Provider searches for patient data have nearly tripled.



The number of participating organizations has increased 16%.

The number of individual network users has increased 66%.

“ As a state that faces unique challenges across its diverse communities and geographies, healthEconnect has been a key partner to the State of Alaska in modernizing public health processes and health IT systems to better serve patients. healthEconnect's ability to streamline timely access to critical health information allows our state – and the providers caring for our patients- to focus more on identifying needs and supporting the wellbeing of Alaskans, and less time on manual data and administrative processes. ”

Dr. Anne Zink, MD, FACEP

# AGENDA

9:00 - 9:45	<b>WHAT HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE MEANS FOR ALASKANS</b> <i>Kendra Sticka</i>
9:45 - 10:00	<b>BREAK</b>
10:00 - 10:45	<b>HIE IN ACTION: EVERYDAY JOURNEYS THROUGH ALASKA'S HEALTH SYSTEM</b> <i>Ryan Bramble, Jay Nakashima, Anne Zink</i>
10:45-11:00	<b>BREAK</b>
11:00 - 11:45	<b>PUBLIC HEALTH APPLICATIONS OF HIE</b> <i>Eliza Ramsey, Jessica Downes, Ann'e Garner, Liz Ohlsen, Lisa Sherrell</i>
11:45 - 12:45	<b>LUNCH AND NETWORKING</b>
12:45 - 1:15	<b>STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: HEALTH PRIORITIES &amp; THE POWER OF CONNECTION</b> <i>Heidi Hedberg, Jason Ball</i>
1:15 - 2:00	<b>VALUE-BASED CARE: PAST LESSONS, PRESENT REALITIES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS</b> <i>Aisha Pittman</i>
2:00 - 2:15	<b>BREAK</b>
2:15 - 3:00	<b>LAW OR LORE: PATIENT CONSENT, DATA GOVERNANCE, AND HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE</b> <i>Nichole Sweeney</i>
3:00 - 3:30	<b>CLOSING REMARKS: THE HUMAN ELEMENT BEHIND PROGRESS</b> <i>Brian Walch</i>
3:45 - 5:00	<b>ANNUAL MEETING</b> <i>Non-board community members are invited to attend the annual meeting to provide perspectives on the future directions for Alaska's HIE.</i>

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WHAT HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE MEANS FOR ALASKANS	9:00 - 9:45
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The summit opens with an overview from healthEconnect Alaska’s Executive Director, introducing our mission, values, and role in supporting health care across the state. This session will follow four stories of Alaskans as they interact with different parts of the health care system. Through these examples, we’ll explore how health information exchange shows up in practice, where it supports care, where gaps remain, and what it means for individuals, providers, and communities across Alaska.



**KENDRA STICKA**  
*Executive Director, healthEconnect Alaska*

Kendra Sticka, PhD, RDN, is the Executive Director of healthEconnect Alaska, Alaska’s state-designated health information exchange (HIE). In this role, she spearheads the HIE’s strategic growth and operations, including its continued expansion into underserved rural and urban communities.

Dr. Sticka has worked in Alaska healthcare for more than 20 years, beginning as a clinical dietitian in hospital, clinical, and private practice settings before transitioning to academics and administration. Prior to joining healthEconnect in 2023, she served as the Associate Dean of Clinical Health Sciences at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Throughout her multifaceted career, Dr. Sticka’s leadership has combined data management, clinical expertise, and community engagement, reflecting her dedication to advancing healthcare and improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities across the state.

Dr. Sticka holds master’s degrees in nutrition and adult education and a PhD in biochemistry and molecular biology. She currently serves on the board of directors for Hope Community Resources in Anchorage, which supports people who experience intellectual or developmental disabilities.

The proliferation of data exchange over local and national networks has accelerated in recent years. At the same time exponential advancements in large language model (LLM) artificial intelligence tools have excited the healthcare industry with promises of faster, safer, and more effective clinical decision-making. At this intersection of increased data exchange and AI are numerous policy, governance, and privacy questions that must be addressed.

In the not-so-distant future, treatment-based queries of local and national networks could grab data, push it through LLMs, and generate instantaneous insights that could help automate clinical decision support, identify public health issues, and bring greater insights right to the physician's fingertips. Alaskans must feel comfortable that these rapidly growing healthcare interoperability and technological advancements are used transparently, ethically, and are governed through a trusted framework that understands the history of the state and its healthcare system.



### RYAN BRAMBLE

*Chief Operating Officer, CRISP Shared Services*

Ryan Bramble is Vice President & Chief Operating Officer for CRISP Shared Services. He is the longest serving team member, having joined CRISP in 2008 as part of the initial HIE planning project. Throughout the years, Ryan has served as a Business Analyst, Project Manager, the Director of Integrations, and the Executive Director of CRISP DC before assuming the COO role. As COO, Ryan is responsible for technology products and infrastructure, the CSS data team, customer implementations, and other operations supporting our CRISP Shared Services affiliates including healthEconnect Alaska.



### JAY NAKASHIMA

*President, eHealth Exchange*

Jay Nakashima leads eHealth Exchange, the nation's largest and oldest health information network, a non-profit dedicated to improving patient care, public health, and healthcare administration by ensuring patients' electronic medical records are securely provided to federal agencies, healthcare providers and public health agencies nationwide.



## ANNE ZINK

*Senior Fellow, Yale*

Dr. Anne Zink is a practicing Emergency Medicine physician in Palmer, Alaska, and a public health leader dedicated to innovative, data-driven strategies that strengthen individual and community health. She serves as a Senior Fellow at the Yale School of Public Health, focusing on health data visualization, teaching, and mentoring future public health leaders. She is also a Public Health Senior Advisor to The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Brown STAT Network, and contributes to national initiatives through roles on the Vaccine Integrity Program, the Common Health Coalition, and the Biosecurity Game Changer Coalition.

From 2018 to 2024, Dr. Zink served as Alaska's Chief Medical Officer, leading the state through the COVID-19 pandemic and championing major initiatives in health system redesign, complex care coordination, prevention, and public health integration. She also served as president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, representing public health leaders across all U.S. states and territories.

Hear from Alaska public health leaders about their participation in healthEconnect and ways that the HIE is contributing to infectious disease and opioid prevention as well as efforts to conduct death investigations and provide timely communication to providers.



### ELIZA RAMSEY

*Data Specialist, Alaska Department of Health*

Eliza Ramsey works on projects across the data lifecycle at the Alaska Department of Health. She recently completed the CSTE Applied Public Health Informatics Fellowship with the agency and graduated from the University of Washington with an MPH in Epidemiology. Based out of Anchorage, she appreciates the creativity and connections required to build solutions that serve the wellbeing of communities across Alaska. Outside of work you can find her somewhere outside!



### JESSICA DOWNES

*Director of Population Health, Envoy Integrated Health*

Jessica Downes is a registered nurse with over 20 years of experience most of which has been working in public and population health. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master of Science in Nursing in Leadership, and a Doctorate of Nursing Practice in Health Systems Leadership. Her career has focused on chronic disease prevention, social determinants of health, and building clinical-community linkages to support whole person care.

Jessica currently works with the Envoy integrated network and accountable care organization (ACO), where she leads a specialty project aimed at coordinating care and bridging clinical and community care. Her work emphasizes streamlined, coordinated approaches that bring together diverse provider sectors to deliver comprehensive, person-centered care. As a panelist, Jessica brings deep insight into how technology can support meaningful health integration across systems.



## ANN'E GARNER

*Operations Administrator, State Medical Examiner Office*

Ann'e Garner is the Operations Administrator for the Alaska State Medical Examiner's Office. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science from Seattle University and began her career as a Medicolegal Death Investigator in 2008. Over the past decade with the State of Alaska, Ann'e has been dedicated to supporting the mission of the Medical Examiner's Office through leadership, education, and advocacy. In her current role, she works to promote awareness of the office's critical work, secure funding for continuing staff education, ensure access to proper equipment, and advance efforts toward national accreditation.



## LIZ OHLSEN

*Staff Physician, Alaska Department of Health*

Dr. Liz Ohlsen is a practicing family physician and a staff physician with the Section of Epidemiology, Alaska Division of Public Health. She works to improve the prevention and control of infectious diseases in Alaska, including hepatitis C, syphilis and other STIs, respiratory infections, and hospital-acquired or multi-drug-resistant infections.



## LISA SHERRELL

*Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Manager, State of Alaska*

Lisa Sherrell is the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) Manager for the State of Alaska. Since joining the PDMP in January of 2020, she has focused on education efforts with health care provider licensees and developing partnerships with other stakeholders. Lisa oversees the training of 20 staff across five healthcare licensing boards to ensure program cohesion and consistency. She has successfully leveraged partnerships to obtain funding for PDMP improvements including statewide integration efforts, more staff to assist with monitoring compliance, non-fatal overdose notifications, and other enhancements to the Alaska PDMP.

In this session, leaders from the Alaska Department of Health will share current priorities and how the department is thinking about the role of data, technology, and collaboration in meeting the state's health goals. Building on last year's conversation, we'll hear updates on strategic initiatives and how information exchange continues to support alignment across public health, policy, and care delivery in Alaska.



### HEIDI HEDBERG

*Commissioner, Alaska Department of Health*

Commissioner Heidi Hedberg was appointed in late 2022 and brings years of experience within the department, having served since 2009. Before becoming Commissioner, she led the Division of Public Health as Director beginning in 2019. With more than a decade of experience in public health, she brings leadership in areas such as emergency response, health care access, and strengthening Alaska's health systems.



### JASON BALL

*Chief Health Data Officer, Alaska Department of Health*

Jason Ball supports Alaskans through his role as Chief Health Data Officer for the Department of Health. He studied at the University of Alaska before earning his professional credentials as a Certified Program Integrity Professional through a partnership with CMS and the Department of Justice. Jason has served as a guest instructor and health data expert at the Medicaid Integrity Institute and has previously led Alaska's Medicaid efforts for complex care projects with the National Governor's Association. Jason's health care career in Alaska spans more than 20 years.

The movement toward value-based care and accountable care has reshaped the healthcare landscape over the past decade, offering both promise and persistent challenges. This session will trace the history of value-based care, examining key milestones and obstacles faced by providers and policymakers in advancing accountable care. We will then look ahead, discussing what's on the horizon under the current federal administration and Congress, and what these developments mean for the future of payment and delivery reform.



### AISHA PITTMAN

*Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, National Association of ACOs*

Aisha Pittman, MHP, is the Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the National Association of ACOs (NAACOS), where she leads advocacy and thought leadership to advance value-based care and provider-led transformation. With more than 20 years of health care experience, Ms. Pittman specializes in payment policy, alternative payment models, and quality improvement.

Before joining NAACOS, Ms. Pittman served as Vice President of Policy at Premier, Inc., working with policymakers and health care stakeholders to reduce costs and enhance care quality. She previously held senior roles at the National Quality Forum, the Maryland Health Care Commission, CenterLight Healthcare, and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

Ms. Pittman earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, and a Master of Public Health from The George Washington University, where she received the School of Public Health and Health Services Excellence in Health Policy Award.

## LAW OR LORE: PATIENT CONSENT, DATA GOVERNANCE, AND HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

2:15 – 3:00

Every time a patient sees a health care provider, we are asked to sign many, many pages of paperwork. Part of this stack of paperwork includes something that tells us our “privacy rights.” This session will explore exactly what those rights are and how they impact how and when providers share information. We will specifically focus on the difference between data sharing that is allowed with or without a patient signing a consent form and the types of data and sharing that require specific, affirmative consent form. We will highlight how these laws impact data sharing within Alaska’s health information exchange and the additional layers of governance in the exchange that further protect data sharers, receivers, and patients. After this session, it is our hope that those attending will understand the difference between the Law and Lore of patient consent and data exchange.



### NICHOLE SWEENEY

*General Counsel and Chief Privacy Officer, CRISP Shared Services*

Nichole Sweeney, J.D., is General Counsel and Chief Privacy Officer for Maryland’s state-designated HIE, CRISP, as well as for CRISP Shared Services, Inc., a managed services organization supporting Health Information Exchanges and Health Data Utilities nationwide. She advises senior leadership and board on legal priorities including privacy, HIPAA, and data use matters; strategic initiatives; partner agreements; and operational optimization. With a strong background in public policy, Nichole helps shape advocacy efforts for interoperability at local, regional, and national levels. She serves on the Carequality Steering Committee, the TEFCA Transitional Council, and chairs Maryland’s Protected Health Commission.

Nichole spent over a decade in policy roles at a non-profit operator of federally funded research and development centers, collaborating with agencies across HHS to implement major healthcare legislation. She partnered with ONC and CMS to draft and implement healthcare IT interoperability regulations. A graduate of Georgetown University Law Center, Order of the Coif, Nichole also holds an undergraduate degree in Women’s Studies and Religion.

## CLOSING REMARKS: THE HUMAN ELEMENT BEHIND PROGRESS

3:00 – 3:30

From systems integration to policy alignment, healthcare transformation is full of complexity, especially when technology is involved. Yet amidst the tools, processes, and data, it's easy to lose sight of the end goal: healthier people and stronger communities. In this closing session, Brian Walch will reflect on key themes from the day and offer a grounded reminder that people must remain central to any lasting solution.



### BRIAN WALCH

*Owner, Shiftfocus Coaching and Consulting*

Brian Walch is a certified executive coach and the owner of Shiftfocus Coaching and Consulting, based in Anchorage, Alaska. With over 25 years of experience in IT consulting and leadership, Brian brings a practical, grounded approach to helping organizations strengthen their management culture and build leadership capacity.

He works with organizations to develop their managers and empower them to drive growth, innovation, and sustainable results. As a former tech consultant, he understands the unique challenges at the intersection of systems and people.

Brian is a regular contributor to Alaska Business Magazine, a frequent speaker, and an advocate for Alaska's youth.

YOUR

## NEXT STEPS



**SHARE INFORMATION** about healthEconnect Alaska, the State Health Information Exchange (HIE) with your colleagues or networks who may benefit. This video provides an overview of what the HIE is and, through stories, the different ways the HIE can benefit Alaskans and Alaska healthcare systems.



**REQUEST A DEMONSTRATION** of the healthEconnect Alaska tools that may benefit your organization. The healthEconnect team is available for individual or small group demonstrations on features of the HIE that may be helpful for your specific organization. Contact us to schedule time to connect!



**EXPLORE OUR SERVICES & RESOURCES.** Visit our website to see the services the HIE offers as well as our resource library that has tools to help you use the HIE. Please check back frequently as we are continuing to update resources available for you!