



Health Datapalooza IV Tops Off a Huge Year in Health Data Liberation & Innovation

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Looking back now, it is amazing to think that four years ago this all started with 45 people in a small room at the Institute of Medicine. Over the course of those four years the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has liberated over 400 datasets, participated in a countless number of codeathons, and has seen and helped developers build hundreds of apps, services, and products using health data.

At HHS, we have evolved and improved how we make health data available to the public. Last year, we launched a new version of healthdata.gov and made it significantly easier for our internal publishers to get their datasets listed, both manually and through an application programming interface (API). We've added the ability to generate APIs from any dataset that's stored directly in our database; [TXT4Tots](#) is the most recent example of this. And lastly, building on the [Presidential Open Data Executive Order](#), we've made data more discoverable by releasing our healthdata.gov/data.json file. This will make it very easy for other data catalogs to consume the records in Healthdata.gov, allowing for the easy spread of open health data. We even open-sourced the CKAN extension that generates the

data.json file on [Project Open Data](#) .

This year at Health Datapalooza we featured a Data Lab Session with HHS's Health Data Leads. The Health Data Leads are subject matter experts who are changing the culture of data liberation at HHS by identifying and releasing new data sets, describing the context of data and providing insights into its use, and providing data education to entrepreneurs. This session highlighted datasets from a number of HHS agencies, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health and more.

In addition to the work we have done to make it easier to find and access HHS data, we have launched a number of new data-use opportunities over the past year. We have challenged entrepreneurs and tech developers to take our data and create apps to help mothers and children live healthier lives with the [TXT4Apps Challenge](#); we have asked people to mash up air-quality data with individual health data with the [My Air, My Health Challenge](#); and we have just launched the new [Blue Button CoDesign Challenge](#). This challenge aims to increase the number of consumer-facing applications able to receive clinical data via Blue Button Plus. This challenge will also uniquely engage the patient community to teach us what patients most want to do with their clinical data by crowdsourcing application ideas and incorporating patients in product design. You can participate too: submit your idea at <http://ideas.healthtechhatch.com> by June 11.

This Administration has been focusing on empowering Americans' with access to their own personal data. The Administration has launched My Data Initiatives across multiple sectors including health, energy, and education. In the health domain, thanks to Blue Button, some 88 million Americans now have access to a digital copy of their health records or health claims from Federal agencies such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Defense (DoD) and private health plans such as United HealthCare and Aetna. This past year, HHS partnered with industry to advance the next generation of Blue Button—making the data machine-readable and able to be transmitted securely to consumer applications.

Sixty-eight health technology companies and organizations (including electronic health record companies, health plans, and patient privacy organizations) collaborated on this next version of Blue Button, called Blue Button Plus—which will serve as a blueprint for the automated, structured, and secure transmission of personal health data on behalf of a patient. In February 2013, the [Blue Button Plus Implementation Guide](#) was published.

Lastly, coming out of this years Health Datapalooza, we have three asks of you.

1. **Help consumers make smart decisions on health insurance** - Think about how you can

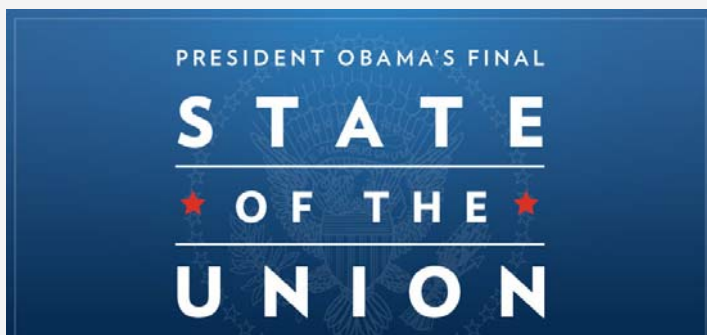
use your talents to connect people with health insurance. Develop an app to help us provide consumers with even more ways to calculate costs and pick a plan that fits their budget. As part of the health care law, [we are making information about health plans more transparent and accessible](#).

2. **Increase the availability of local health data** - Help us encourage the private sector and state and local governments to make local health data more available. While we have seen progress so far in this area, more can be done.
3. **Adopt Blue Button Plus** - We are encouraging all providers and health plans to adopt Blue Button Plus to make it even easier for consumers to download their health information. An "automated" Blue Button could create a new ecosystem of consumer applications that empower individuals and their families to better manage their health and health finances.

If you missed the excitement of the Health Datapalooza this year, the next one is already set for June 1 - 3, 2014, in Washington, DC. See you there!

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