Oracle Health Patient Portal 2025 Standards Version Advancement Process (SVAP) Updates

Introduction

As part of our efforts to maintain currency with the most contemporary industry standards for interoperability and accessibility, Oracle Health will be releasing updates to our Oracle Health Patient Portal to support Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) accessibility standards. These updates will be certified with the US Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy and Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ASTP/ONC) through their Standards Version Advancement Process (SVAP).

To help provide background and address questions that may be raised, we compiled the following FAQs. If you have additional questions that are not addressed, please direct them to ocregulatorycompliance_us@oracle.com.

What is the SVAP?

The Standards Version Advancement Process, or SVAP, is a feature adopted by the ASTP/ONC in the Cures Act final rule for their Health IT Certification Program.

Since the ASTP/ONC's certification program provides the software requirements and associated standards and implementation specifications required to be used by healthcare providers for participation in CMS programs impacting reimbursement (e.g., Promoting Interoperability and MIPS), the regulations which cite specific standards (and corresponding versions of those standards) can inadvertently limit industry advancement and innovation or create potential compliance conundrums.

For example, ASTP/ONC program regulation cites the WCAG 2.0 version as the required standard for patient portals certifying to the View, Download, and Transmit to 3rd Party (45 CFR 170.315(e)(1)) criterion. However, WCAG 2.0 was replaced by WCAG 2.1 (released June 2018), and WCAG 2.1 was replaced by WCAG 2.2 (released October 2023). When subsequent versions of the standard are available, developers may seek to support the newer version as best practice above the regulatory floor.

The SVAP is the process through which new versions of adopted standards under the certification program related to interoperability are reviewed annually and considered for approval for voluntary certification by certified developers, like Oracle Health[1].

This means that instead of having to wait for ASTP/ONC to adopt new versions of interoperability or accessibility standards via regulation, developers (and their customers) may move forward with new versions of standards on a voluntary basis without any risk of regulatory compliance issues. The result is a more flexible regulatory environment which also lends itself to faster adoption of new interoperability-related innovations across the industry.

How does the SVAP work?

Each January, ASTP/ONC provides a list of new versions of current adopted interoperability standards and implementation specifications under the program which have been (or are soon to be) released or published during the current calendar year. These are the new versions of standards that are proposed for adoption under the SVAP for that

[1] Regulatory certifications under the ASTP/ONC Health IT Certification Program are held by Cerner Corporation. Cerner Corporation is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Oracle. Cerner Corporation is an ONC-certified health IT developer and a registered medical device manufacturer in the United States and other jurisdictions worldwide.

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calendar year. ASTP/ONC then provides the industry with an opportunity to submit public comment on whether each proposed new version should be adopted and made available for voluntary certification.

The proposed standards are published at healthit.gov/svap with a tag identifying them as *new version under consideration*, and new versions of standards published after January can be dynamically inherited into the review process or recommended by stakeholders via comment.

Public commenting closes in May and ASTP/ONC reviews comments to come to a decision on which new versions to approve. In June, approved new versions of adopted standards for that year are announced and certified developers can begin voluntarily using those new versions in their certified modules after a 60-day delay period. You can view the new approved versions for each calendar year on the ONC Health IT Certification Program SVAP page.

*Please note that due to transition within the agency in 2025, SVAP standards have not been presented for comment and approval in 2025

What new WCAG SVAP standards is Oracle Health Patient Portal advancing to for 2025?

For 2025, Oracle Health's new age Patient Portal cloud service will be advancing to support the WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards per Oracle accessibility policy and standards. The version of Oracle Health Patient Portal supporting the enhanced accessibility standard is currently pursuing certification and will be published as version 2 of the product on the Certified Health IT Product List (CHPL) later this spring.

How will these updates affect real world interoperability of the Oracle Health Patient Portal?

The update to WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards is intended to provide an overall more accessible experience for end-users and is not expected to introduce any potential negative impacts to the real-world usability or interoperability of the product.

Will Oracle Health continue to support the 2.0 version of WCAG cited in regulation?

WCAG accessibility standard versions build upon each other, each representing a higher bar. Therefore, support for WCAG 2.2 means that the product will support the same accessibility requirements of WCAG 2.0 plus a higher bar of requirements beyond what 2.0 specifies. It should be noted that a criterion may be modified, a criterion may be removed, and a criterion may be added with new WCAG versions.

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