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***Using Health Information Exchanges for Family Reunification***



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APRIL 14-17, 2015  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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# Session Overview

- **Brief Background on Family Reunification**
- **Existing Systems**
- **What is a Health Information Exchange (HIE)?**
- **What is NYC Emergency Patient Search (NYCEPS)?**
- **Policy and Legal Considerations**
- **Discussion**

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# Post-Disaster Family Reunification

Everyone near and far wants to know if their loved ones are safe after a disaster.

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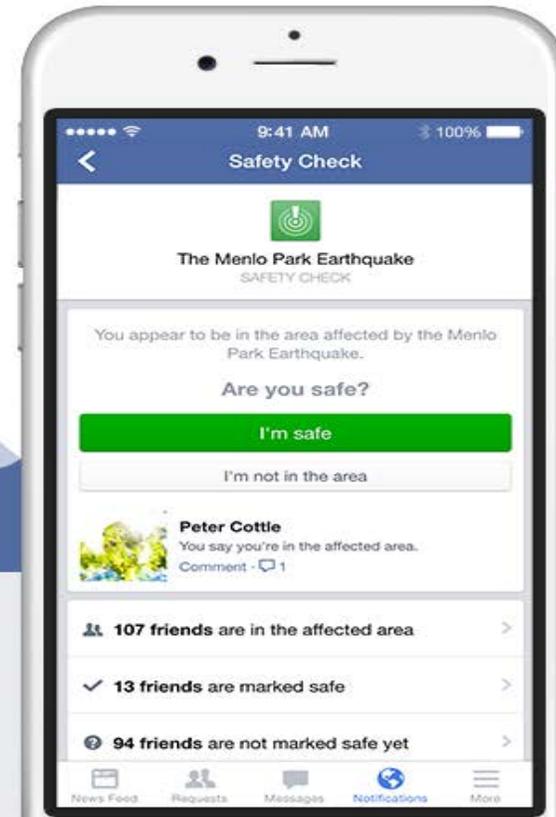


# Social Media Has Helped Tremendously

facebook

## Safety Check

Connect with friends and loved ones during a disaster.



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# American Red Cross

## Safe and Well

After a disaster, letting your family and friends know that you are safe and well can bring your loved ones great peace of mind. This website is designed to help make that communication easier.

### Register Yourself as "Safe and Well"

Click on the "List Myself as Safe and Well" button to register yourself on the site.

### Search for Loved Ones

Concerned family and friends can search the list of those who have registered themselves as "safe and well" by clicking on the "Search Registrants" button. The results of a successful search will display a loved one's first name, last name and a brief message.



List Myself as Safe and Well

Search Registrants



Japan (in test mode)

## How it works

[Frequently asked questions](#)

[For responders](#)

[For developers](#)

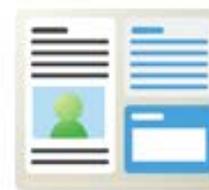
Google Person Finder helps people reconnect with friends and loved ones in the aftermath of natural and humanitarian disasters.



A crisis strikes and people get separated.



They let the world know they are looking for someone.



Individuals and organizations provide information.



People find information about their friends and family.

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## Responders

You can help people find each other in the aftermath of a disaster:

- Embed Google Person Finder in your site
- Download data from Google Person Finder
- Upload data into Google Person Finder

[See how »](#)

## Developers

You can help continue to improve Google Person Finder:

- Learn about the PFIF data model
- Customize or improve Person Finder

[Get started »](#)

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# When You Can't Reach Your Loved One?

Phone calls to everywhere and everyone:

- *Friends / Family*
- *Hospitals*
- *Police / Missing Persons*
- *Family Assistance Center*

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# Government Response/Recovery Role

## Mass Casualty Incident (MCI)

↳ *Family Assistance Center*

↳ *Family Reunification Services*

***Jurisdictions vary in how patient tracking & family reunification is handled***

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# Patient Tracking

From Incident Scene to Hospital

- EMS Systems that Hospitals, Health Depts and Emergency Management have access to
- Tag victims / Use wireless Networks
- Information available to Family Assistance Center (often includes American Red Cross)

**Vs.**

# Family Reunification

Helping reunite missing persons with missing (or deceased) loved ones



# Lessons From Across The Country

- Centralized Patient Tracking info important and reduces duplication/burden
- Some are part of larger situational awareness system
- Hospitals would like advance notice on types of patients arriving
- Many systems remain untested in real emergency
- Require buy in from many stakeholders
  - (e.g. Health, EMS, Hospitals, EM, PD, Med Examiner)

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# Lessons from Hurricane Sandy (2012)

- DOHMH developed electronic survey to track patients evacuated from NHs / ACFs to Special Medical Needs Shelters (SMNS)
- DOHMH had staff at SMNS 24/7 (19 days) Public called 311 and then transferred to DOHMH Call Center
- Tracked >1700 patients
- DOHMH was able to assist ~250 families looking for loved ones



*Brooklyn Tech High School*

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# New York City *Emergency Patient Search* (NYCEPS)

## GOAL

Provide a centralized, secure, searchable system to help reunify loved ones after an emergency



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# Background

- **2010 Workgroup:**
  - *Hospitals, Office of Emergency Management and Health Department*
  - *Recommend approach to support family reunification and reduce burden on healthcare system*
- **Key Criteria for IT solution:**
  - *Little or no additional data entry required*
  - *Existing system / Not introduced during an emergency*
  - *Access data close to real time*
- **Reviewed 6 Existing Systems:**
  - *Unified Victim Identification System (UVIS)*
  - *NYS Health Emergency Response Data System (HERDS)*
  - *NYC Electronic Vital Events Registration System (EVERS)*
  - *SAHANA*
  - *Syndromic Surveillance*
  - *Health Information Exchanges (HIEs)*
    - *Known in New York State - Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs)*

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# Work Group Recommendation



*Leverage Health Information Exchanges (HIE)*

## Why?

*Real-time data*

*Additional data entry not required*

*Leverages existing system*

*Secure*

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# What is a Health Information Exchange (HIE)?

*aka Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO)*

- Organization enabling the sharing of clinical healthcare information electronically across regional providers (hospitals, primary care, community health centers)
- Ultimate objective is to improve the speed, safety, quality, and efficiency of healthcare as well as access to healthcare through the efficient application of health information technology
  - *Avoid readmissions*
  - *Avoid medication errors*
  - *Improve diagnoses*
  - *Decrease duplicate testing*
  - *Reduce costs*



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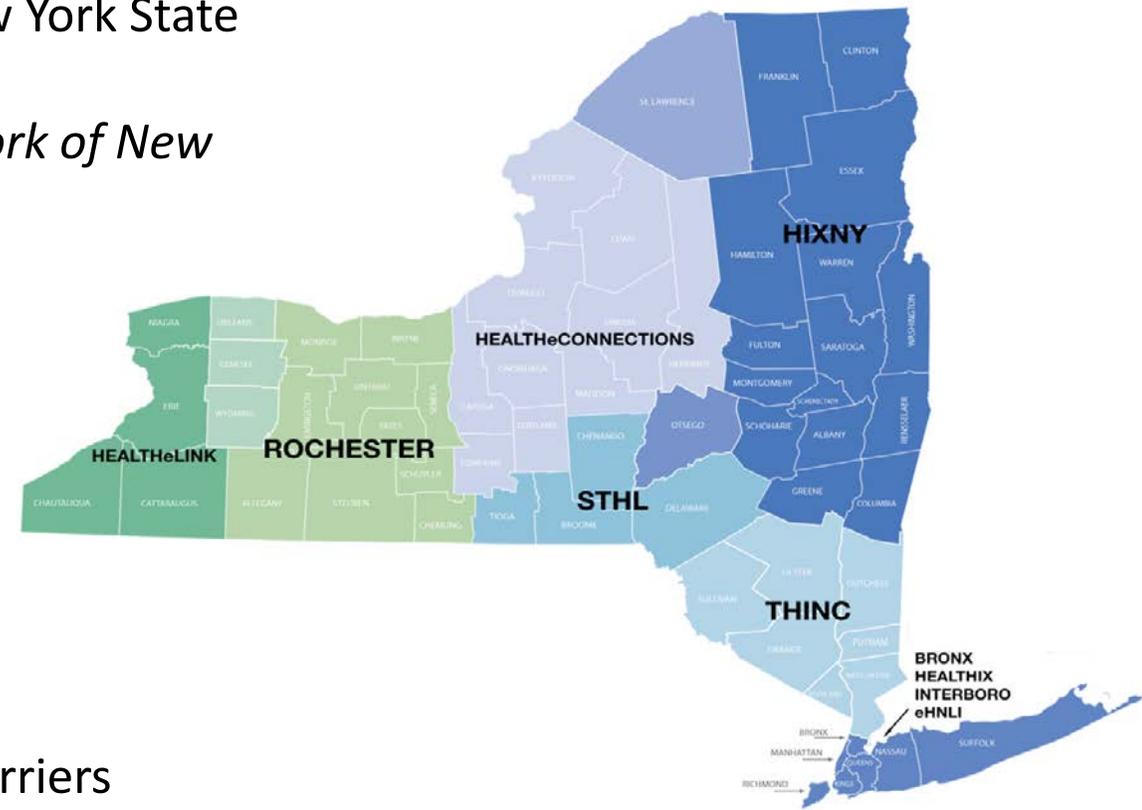
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# New York State RHIO Landscape

- 10 RHIOs provide coverage across New York State
- 1 *Statewide Health Information Network of New York (SHIN-NY)* connects all 10 RHIOs
- 3 RHIOs provide coverage for NYC
- 11% Statewide participation rate (Providers)
- 2% NYC participation rate (Providers)
- ~\$95M provided to lower adoption barriers
- 100% Coverage of Ambulance / 911 Receiving Hospitals in NYC (49)



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# NYC RHIOs



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# What is NYCEPS?

## *New York City Emergency Patient Search*

- Web-based tool that queries the 3 NYC RHIOs for demographic data based on public search requests
- Central resource to aid in family reunification
- Aims to reduce burden on:
  - *Healthcare facilities*
  - *Missing persons investigations*
- NO access to clinical data
- Does NOT save queried data
- Emergency Use Only
- **100% coverage of all 911 Ambulance Receiving Hospitals (49)**

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# KEY ADVANTAGES

- Reduces burden on hospitals
  - *Less phone and walk-in inquiries searching for loved ones*
  - *No additional work on behalf of the healthcare facilities*
- Allows public to contact one location, as opposed to numerous facilities across NYC
- Lessen investigation burden on NYPD Missing Person

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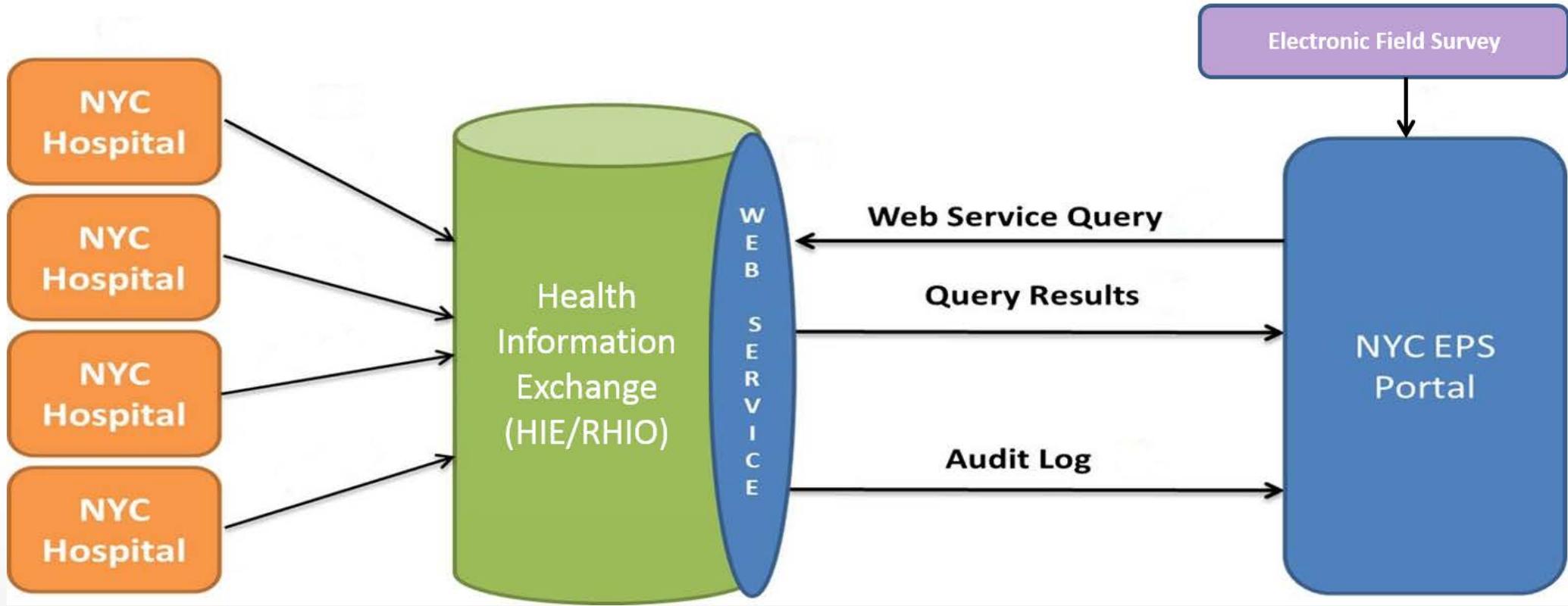
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# Design Concept



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# Emergency Use Only

## When will this system be activated?

- By NYC Commissioner of Health for use in an emergency

## What data does NYCEPS need?

- Basic personal demographics (Name, Gender, Age Range)

## Who has access to the system?

- DOHMH will authorize NYCEPS users in accordance with DUA
- Interactions are tracked via detailed audit logs

## Who will the information be given to?

- Family members seeking information to reunite with their loved ones

## What information is being given out?

- Potential Hospital and Phone # of the matching description

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# Proposed Emergency Protocol

## 1) Public calls hotline and provides (at minimum):

- First Name
- Last Name
- Gender
- Age Range

## 2) Search Results

- If match is found, operator will inform caller that a person matching that description may be located at XXX facility and advise they call to confirm
- If no match, caller will be advised to call back later and/or entered into missing person system

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# Caller Info Screen

NYC Emergency Patient Search (NYC EPS)

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[Help](#)

Search for Patient/Person

Administration

Event Activation

Login User: ( thadi ) Log Out

## Caller Information

Last Name\*

First Name\*

Relationship\*

Primary #\*

Secondary #

Tertiary #



Enter Patient Information

Clear

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# Patient/Person Search Screen

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[Help](#)

Search for Patient/Person

Administration

Event Activation

Login User: ( thadi ) Log Out

## Patient/Person Search

Event Tag

--Select--

Start Date

End Date

Patient/Person

Exact Search ( Last Name, First Name, Gender and Date of birth is required. )

Last Name\*

Middle Name

First Name\*

Gender\*

--Select--

Date of Birth

--Select--

--Select--



Age Range\*

-

(Age range should be between 0 and 120)

Race

--Select--

Bar Code

Home Address

Street Number

Pre Directional

--Select--

Street Name

Street Designator

--Select--

Post Directional

--Select--

Apt #, Suite #,  
etc.

City or Town

State

--Select--

Country

United States

Zip Code

Primary #

Secondary #

Tertiary #



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Search

Clear

Edit Caller Information

Call Resolution

# Search Results Screen

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[Help](#)

Search for Patient/Person

Administration

Event Activation

Login User: ( nkumar ) Log Out

## Search Result

<u>Last Name</u>	Middle Name	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Facility Name Address</u>	<u>Disposition</u>	<u>Disposition Date</u>
 fim		jake	Male	33	V	IN			9/19/2013

1 of 1

10 ▾

Call Resolution

Return to Search

**Emergency Department Visits  
Inpatient Admissions  
Inpatient Discharges  
Intra-Facility Transfers**

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# Facility Contact Info



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## NYC Emergency Patient Search (NYC EPS)

Search for Patient/Person Administration Event Activation

### Search Result

Last Name	Middle Name	First Name	Gender	Age	City	State	Facility Name Address
<a href="#">→</a> Kumar							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> Kumar							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> rKumar							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> qKumar							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> pKumar							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> oJain							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> nJain							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> mJain							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> lJain							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>
<a href="#">→</a> kJain							<a href="#">Presbyterian</a>

Facility Details

Name	Address	Contact Number
Presbyterian	5141 BROADWAY NEW YORK, NY10034	(877) 697-9355

Close

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# Call Resolution

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[Help](#)

[Search for Patient/Person](#)

[Administration](#)

[Event Activation](#)

[Login User: \( nkumar \)](#) [Log Out](#)

[+ Edit Caller Information](#)

[+ Patient/Person Information](#)

Call Resolution

Resolution\*

Case Status\*

Comments

Save

Cancel

[+ Call History](#) ( Caller Count = 4 )

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# Legal & Privacy Considerations

## Public Health Authority

- As the public health government agency, authority by law to receive patient data and protected health information used to respond to public health emergencies.
- Authorized by applicable Federal, State and local laws, rules, regulations and guidelines - including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- RHIOs may disclose protected health information on behalf of a data supplier that is permitted to disclose protected health information to a government agency for the purposes of public health intervention, including responding to public health emergencies.



**Data Use Agreement (DUA) still needed between HIE/RHIO and the Health agency**

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# Privacy Considerations

Only giving out potential Hospital address and phone # if there is a match

Hospitals have their own privacy and patient protection protocols

**Does the HIPAA Privacy Rule permit hospitals and other health care facilities to inform visitors or callers about a patient's location in the facility and general condition?**

- Yes. Covered hospitals/ health care providers can use a facility directory to inform visitors or callers about patient's location and general condition in the facility. The Privacy Rule permits covered hospital / health care provider to maintain in a directory certain information about patients – patient name, location, health condition expressed in general terms that does not communicate specific medical information about the individual, and religious affiliation. The patient must be informed about the information to be included in the directory, and to whom the information may be released, and **must have the opportunity to restrict the information or to whom it is disclosed, or opt out** of being included in the directory. See 45 CFR 164.510(a).

- Concern about malicious intent of callers (e.g. domestic violence)
- Hospitals indicated main concern is typically lawyers and media trying to access patients following a major incident

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# Other Uses for HIE/RHIO Data at Health Department

- **QueryHealth** – Tool designed to aggregate clinical data across NYS RHIOs for public health purposes
- **Correctional Health** - contributes data to RHIO
- **Communicable Diseases** – improving efficiency of case investigations (e.g. staff travel in hospitals to perform chart reviews on site)

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# Next Steps & Challenges

- Complete Integration with RHIOs
- Clarify how NYCEPS fits within NYC emergency response systems
- Identify where calls will be directed
- Clarify triggers for activation
- Explore interoperability with NYS DOH system (eFINDS)
- Explore statewide need

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# QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



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