



## **Patient ID Now Coalition 2021 Year in Review**

Officially formed in June 2020, the Patient ID Now coalition completed its first full year in 2021. Despite the challenges brought by a new Congress and the continuing disruption of the healthcare system by the COVID-19 pandemic, the coalition made great strides in its goal to repeal Section 510 from the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) bill and to promote the creation of a national strategy on patient identification and matching.

This year saw continued growth for the coalition, with twelve new organizations added to the [roster of coalition members](#). The coalition's influence within the healthcare sphere continued to grow as well, with mentions in 42 news articles, which had a combined potential reach of 5.37 million, that highlighted the work and aims of Patient ID Now.

One significant achievement of the coalition that garnered attention in 2021 was the creation and release of the Patient ID Now [Framework for a National Strategy on Patient Identity: A Proposed Blueprint to Improve Identification and Matching](#). The Framework includes a comprehensive history of the issue of patient identification and matching, as well as an outline of foundational components of and considerations for a national strategy to improve patient identification and matching.

Legislatively, the coalition made tremendous strides in advocating for the repeal of Section 510 from the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Labor-HHS appropriations bill. In April, the coalition sent letters to leaders of the Appropriations Committees in the [US House of Representatives](#) and [US Senate](#) signed by 103 organizations, asking for repeal of the ban. The coalition also submitted written testimony calling for repeal of section 510 to the Labor-HHS subcommittees in the [House](#) and [Senate](#). Working with our champions in the House, Representative Bill Foster (D-IL) and Representative Mike Kelly (R-PA), the coalition worked to encourage Representatives to sign onto a Dear Colleague letter asking for a repeal of the ban. The effort successfully garnered [29 Representatives](#) signing onto the letter, an increase from the previous year. To support these efforts, the coalition met with more than 50 Congressional offices, submitted more than 110 written appropriations requests, and sent nearly 1,700 emails during our Patient ID Day campaign on March 24.

As a result of the coalition's efforts, the House of Representatives repealed Section 510 from its Labor-HHS bill for the third year in a row. More importantly, unlike prior years, the House Appropriations Committee left the language out in the base text of the bill, rather than having to repeal the ban by amendment on the House floor, signaling an increase in support for lifting the ban. Even more notably, this year for the first time, the Senate Appropriations Committee removed Section 510 from its draft Labor-HHS bill. In its [bill summary](#), the Senate Appropriations Committee stated:

*"The bill drops the prohibition on using funding to develop a unique patient health identifier for each individual's health information. The long-standing ban has been a barrier for health institutions to reliably share information about patients, and during COVID-19, for public health entities to effectively trace contacts and track immunizations."*



With the federal budget under a continuing resolution until February 18, 2022, the coalition will continue to work to ensure that Section 510 remains out of the final version of the Senate bill.

The coalition continues to advocate for the need to address patient identification in other legislation as well. In June, the coalition submitted [comments on the Cures 2.0](#) draft legislation, urging the authorization of the creation of a national strategy on patient identification. The Coalition will continue to explore other legislative avenues of bolstering patient identification and matching.

On the regulatory side, Patient ID Now met with Dr. Micky Tripathi, the new National Coordinator of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and his team to ensure we are engaged in the work related to patient identification and matching. Patient ID Now had previously engaged in ONC's process of gathering information for a congressionally mandated report on patient identification and matching, originally due to Congress in December 2020. Though it was delayed earlier this year, as the report approaches being overdue by one year, the coalition worked with our champions on the Hill to send a [letter to ONC](#) encouraging swift delivery of the report.

Patient ID Now also [submitted comments](#) to the US Department of Health and Human Service's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) on the proposed modifications to the HIPAA Privacy Rule. As part of the coalition's comments, it shared the Framework for a National Strategy on Patient Identity as a recommendation on how to address the identity verification measures proposed in the rule.

The coalition would like to thank all of our members for your participation, engagement, and advocacy in 2021. Our achievements would not have been possible without the support of each member organization. We look forward to continuing to work with you in 2022 and to achieve even more progress next year.