Dispute Resolution
The document you are reading is part of the **Connecting for Health Common Framework for Networked Personal Health Information**, which is available in full and in its most current version at [http://www.connectingforhealth.org/](http://www.connectingforhealth.org/).

This framework proposes a set of practices that, when taken together, encourage appropriate handling of personal health information as it flows to and from personal health records (PHRs) and similar applications or supporting services.

As of June 2008, the Common Framework included the following published components:
Dispute Resolution*

**Purpose:** If they have concerns about their PHR or related services, consumers should have a transparent and easy-to-use process to resolve questions or disputes, such as:

- Misuse or breach of data. *(See CP5: Notification of Misuse or Breach.)*
- Disputes about privacy or data collection, handling, uses, or disclosures.
- Disputes claiming unfair or deceptive business practices.
- Data quality or matching errors.

Examples of trust-building mechanisms include but are not limited to the following:

- **Online negotiation:** PayPal's online Resolution Center¹ is an example of a service that enables buyers and sellers to negotiate and resolve disputes. If they fail, the case escalates to a PayPal claim, which the company investigates and resolves.
- **Ombudsman:** Used frequently in governments and industries such as journalism, an ombudsman is designed to be a neutral office charged with hearing and investigating complaints from the public.
- **Call centers:** In some organizations, existing call centers may serve to handle questions or disputes from consumers.

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This practice area addresses the following *Connecting for Health* Core Principles for a Networked Environment*:

6. Data quality and integrity
8. Accountability and oversight
9. Remedies


Consumers ideally will have a clear and logical pathway with effective options to raise and resolve disputes. At minimum, consumers should be provided with information to set realistic expectations about the service's practices for responding to complaints, as well as let consumers know where else they might effectively address their concerns. For example, if a consumer believes there is an error in data imported into her PHR from a Health Data Source, the consumer ideally will have easy access to information about how to contact that Health Data Source to request a correction, and at minimum should be able to easily identify who that Health Data Source is. *(See CP8: Consumer Obtainment and Control of Information, Area 3: Requests to Amend or Dispute Entries.)*

**Recommended Practice:**

PHRs and Consumer Access Services should set clear expectations for how consumers may address complaints. Ideally, PHRs and Consumer Access Services will provide clear and logical pathways for consumers to address and resolve complaints. Installing an ombudsman to accept and manage user disputes in a fair and convenient manner is one such mechanism.
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Jim Dempsey, JD, Center for Democracy and Technology; Janlori Goldman, JD, Health Privacy Project and Columbia University School of Public Health; Joy Pritts, JD, Center on Medical Record Rights and Privacy, Health Policy Institute, Georgetown University; and Marcy Wilder, JD, Hogan & Hartson LLP, made important contributions to the policy framework. Matt Kavanagh, independent contractor, and Clay Shirky, New York University Graduate Interactive Telecommunications Program, made important contributions to the technology framework. Stefaan Verhulst of Markle Foundation provided excellent research, and Jennifer De Pasquale and Michelle Maran of Markle contributed to this framework’s final proofreading and production, respectively.

Connecting for Health Work Group on Consumer Access Policies for Networked Personal Health Information

Lead
David Lansky, PhD, Pacific Business Group on Health (Chair)

Staff
Matt Kavanagh, Independent Contractor
Josh Lemieux, Markle Foundation

Members
Wendy Angst, MHA, CapMed, A Division of Bio-Imaging Technologies, Inc.
Annette Bar-Cohen, MPH, National Breast Cancer Coalition
Jeremy Coote, InterComponentWare, Inc.
Maureen Costello, Ingenix
Diane Davies, MD, University of Minnesota
James Dempsey, JD, Center for Democracy and Technology
Stephen Downs, SM, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Joyce Dubow, AARP
Thomas Eberle, MD, Intel Corporation and Dossia
Lisa Fenichel, Health Care For All
Stefanie Fenton, Intuit, Inc.
Steven Findlay, Consumers Union
Mark Frisse, MD, MBA, MSc, Vanderbilt Center for Better Health
Gilles Frydman, Association of Cancer Online Resources (ACOR.org)
Melissa Goldstein, JD, School of Public Health and Health Services Department of Health Sciences, The George Washington University Medical Center
Philip T. Hagen, MD, Mayo Clinic Health Solutions
Robert Heyl, Aetna, Inc.
David Kibbe, MD, MBA, American Academy of Family Physicians

Jerry Lin, Google Health

Kathleen Mahan, MBA, SureScripts

Ken Majkowski, PharmD, RxHub, LLC

Philip Marshall MD, MPH, WebMD Health

Deven McGraw, Center for Democracy and Technology

Kim Nazi*, FACHE, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Lee Partridge, National Partnership for Women and Families

George Peredy, MD, Kaiser Permanente HealthConnect

Joy Pritts, JD, Center on Medical Record Rights and Privacy, Health Policy Institute, Georgetown University

Scott Robertson, PharmD, Kaiser Permanente

Daniel Sands, MD, MPH, Cisco Systems, Inc.

Clay Shirky, New York University Graduate Interactive Telecommunications Program

Joel Slackman, BlueCross BlueShield Association

Anna Slomovic, PhD, Revolution Health

Cynthia Solomon, Follow Me

Ramesh Srinivasan, MedicAlert Foundation International

Michael Stokes, Microsoft Corporation

Susan Stuard, New York-Presbyterian Hospital

Paul Tang, MD, Palo Alto Medical Foundation/ Sutter Health

Jeanette Thornton, America's Health Insurance Plans

Frank Torres, JD, Microsoft Corporation

Tony Trenkle*, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Jonathan Wald, MD, Partners HealthCare System

James Walker, MD, FACP, Geisinger Health System

Marcy Wilder, JD, Hogan & Hartson LLP

Anna Wong, Medco Health Solutions, Inc.

Matthew Wynia, MD, MPH, CAPH, American Medical Association

Teresa Zayas-Caban, PhD*, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

*Note: State and Federal employees participate in the Personal Health Technology Council but make no endorsement.