



Velatura, a leading multi-jurisdictional health information exchange (HIE) and health data utility (HDU), issued the following statement on the Senate passage of the FY25 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies (Labor-H) Appropriations Act. This landmark legislation includes a crucial definition of Health Data Utilities (HDUs), a critical step forward in improving healthcare delivery and population health outcomes.

“Velatura exuberantly applauds the recent passage of the Labor-H appropriations bill, which represents a significant step forward in recognizing the need to invest in a sophisticated national digital health data infrastructure. For the first time, this bill establishes a clear definition of HDUs, recognizing their potential to revolutionize health information exchange and specifying a clear direction for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to set forth guidance to states to designate HDUs and promote their adoption. As state-designated entities, HDUs can leverage existing HIE infrastructure to enhance data governance and privacy protections. This not-for-profit, stakeholder-governed approach fosters trust and facilitates collaboration between public health leaders, healthcare providers, insurers, community-based organizations and other stakeholders within the healthcare ecosystem. The evolution from the traditional HIE model to the expanded HDU framework offers states a more advanced interoperability infrastructure and additional use cases to more robustly, systematically, efficiently and comprehensively exchange health data utilizing a centralized data model and data governance. HDUs incorporate Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) data alongside clinical and claims data, providing a comprehensive view of a person’s health and needs. This fosters better collaboration among healthcare providers, ultimately leading to improved patient care and outcomes.

Velatura, alongside with CIVITAS Networks for Health, a national nonprofit trade association that is working to use health information exchange, health data and multi-stakeholder, cross-sector, approaches to improve health, has actively advocated for the inclusion of this HDU definition in the bill. We believe this collaborative effort will pave the way for wider adoption of HDUs, ultimately leading to:

- **Enhanced care coordination:** HDUs can connect a wider range of healthcare providers and payers, ensuring patients receive seamless care transitions.
- **Improved public health initiatives:** The ability to share data securely can empower public health officials to track disease outbreaks and implement effective interventions.
- **Reduced healthcare costs:** HDUs can streamline administrative processes and potentially lower healthcare costs for patients, providers and payers

While Velatura is thrilled to have HDUs officially identified in congressional action, it's important to recognize this as the beginning of the journey. For HDUs to reach their full potential, ongoing federal support is crucial. Sustainable funding through public health infrastructure and CMS programs, alongside investments in public health data governance standards, are essential building blocks to build out and sew together the digital health public utility infrastructure that is so needed in the country.

Velatura stands ready to work alongside federal agencies, policymakers, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to leverage the power of HDUs and build a more efficient, equitable, and



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patient-centered healthcare system that prioritizes both clinical care and social determinants of health.”