So the data point that we use and the data that we capture help us understand how successful we are in our programs to help our students, and to paint a better picture of how their skills and training are improved by getting additional education.

- That's important work. Whende, how about you?

- [Whende] I am the founder of Nurse Evolution, which is an information hub for nurses to learn more about technology, analytics, and innovation concepts, and how they work together. And why I think that's so important and for nurses to know is because we need to forward our visibility, and our abilities, and how we use data, and understand the basics of healthcare technology, and our creativity as well.

I'm also the clinical informatics advisor at HIMSS, where I get to work with a lot of different clinicians. And it's imperative that we raise our voice, and we have more vision, and are more visionaries of the value of nursing. And we can do this through the topic we're going to talk about today.

- Thank you, Whende. Nur, I know you work quite a bit with data. Same question to you.

- [Nur] So, as my role as a CIO at National Council, one of the top priorities that I have is to make sure that the data is secure. Right? Security of data is extremely important, especially in this day and age. The data that comes to the Nursys system fro

- The nurse has to not do anything to get an NCSBN ID assigned. Why? Because NCSBN ID is assigned automatically to the nurse through the nursing examination process, namely the NCLEX for PN or NCLEX for RN. And also the data that we get from the boards of nursing through that matching process, the ID is automatically assigned to the nurse.

Every single nurse who becomes licensed gets an ID assigned. So from that perspective, the nurse doesn't have to do anything. Now, however, if a nurse would like to find out their ID, very simple, they have to go to the primary source equivalent nursys.com system.

The data in that system is provided by all the boards of nursing. Without them providing the data, this would not be possible. A nurse can look themselves up, and the ID would be right there assigned to them.

- So, Whende, when you hear about the NCSBN ID, what are some of the advantages that strike you?

- The advantages are...I think, about health systems, and I think how they can use all their disparate data sources from different technologies such as enterprise resource planning to the EHR, to remote patient monitoring, and even equipment such as taking vital signs and things like that.

They can aggregate that data together with the NCSBN ID and begin to look at how nurses are performing. Quality improvement for training, and to be able to see who our high performers are at a high level. We can look at it at a macro level.

And we can have the best outcomes for our patients whom are providing them with the best care for those individuals.

- Personally, I appreciate the convenience. I can go to the website, look it up, print anything. Use Quick Confirm. It's my number. It's my number for life. I've added it to a lot of my documents, my professional documents. And then in education, it's just so easy for us to be able to confirm that our students are licensed when they've had a change in licensure from state to state.

We can use the other products that are available on Nursys to be notified that they've become licensed as an advanced practice nurse, or they've gotten licensure in another state. So it really helps us understand better where our graduates are going beyond our program. And then just as Nur said, the security of knowing that, that the information that is coming from the system is accurate, it's updated daily.

We just have no questions about it.

- I would say it also facilitates the interoperability, and also potential for automation of systems across systems. Today, some of the systems that Whende gave as examples from the ERP system to the EHR, to maybe physiologic monitoring system, each of those have a place for the data to live related to a nurse.

Right now, much of that upload of that information is manual. Using a standard like the unique nurse identifier facilitates automation and interoperability between those systems. In addition to that, I would say as someone who also employs nurses, I am able to very easily automate the lookup to ensure where people are licensed across states, or in individual states, and if their license is current, accurate, and valid.

Now, for a nurse, if the nurse is enrolled in the Nurse e-Notify system that NCSBN provides free of charge to the nurses, if somebody tries to get a license for some reason. Now, there are lots of protection in place by the boards of nursing. They go through a lot of checks and make sure that the individual does not get a license through kind of a fraud, but if somebody tries very hard, and they actually go through identity capture process, or whatever that may be, and if they do get a license in state X, well, if the nurse is connected to Nurse e-Notify, they will get a notification of, "Congratulations that you get a license in state X."

So this nurse can say, "Wait a minute, I did not get a license." All of this connection is done through the NCSBN ID that allows the nurse to keep track of all of their licenses and records based on one ID. And that can help cut down the fraud. I'm also told that CMS is also looking to cut down on fraud from their perspective, because, right now, you can actually have an NPI number, a nurse can get an NPI number, and there is no guarantee that that individual is a nurse because there are no formal checks in place at this point.

So what CMS is attempting to do is when a nurse applies for an NPI, they want to be able to check the Nursys system with the ID, with the NCSBN ID, to make sure that individual is licensed where the nurse is saying they're licensed, and it is not encumbered. So this is a great example of NPI, what it does, but what a unique nurse identifier NCSBN ID does to help cut down on the fraud for NPI as well.

- That's fantastic. And, Nur, just to clarify, in terms of privacy, really with the NCSBN ID, it's just public information to begin with, isn't that right?

- Yeah, that is correct.

- Okay. Well, now, this is going to be fun because, Whende, you mentioned you're a futurist. I'm actually going to have all four of you look into your crystal balls. And give me the next few years ahead for the NCSBN ID in terms of the kinds of things that you think might happen with it. So, Whende, I'll start with you and then we'll give everybody a chance to respond.

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I think that is just going to really exponentially help us to assist in what has become a more open and global community. I think the other thing is, because I'm a systems person, I really see more use of this identifier across technologies to really facilitate interoperability, again.

We now have one of the major EHR vendors who has incorporated this into their technology. And so, many health systems across the U.S., and even outside of the U.S., will have access for a place holder to exchange that information across technologies. So I really think it will become just another really important attribute of an individual who's working for a system.

- Thank you, Nancy. Nur, how about in your crystal ball? And do you see international expansion of NCSBN ID, or do we see it as a U.S.-only at the moment?

- Well, I'll echo what Whende and Nancy mentioned about the international aspect of it. But let me just talk about the security piece, because that's how I started the data security. One of the most important things right now is that you do not want your personally identifiable information, which is also known as the PII, out there.

Your date of birth, your SSN. Unfortunately, when data breaches and data hacks happen, that's the first thing that gets publicized out there. But you want to be able to minimize that. Well, what is the best way to minimize it? Just not have it. For example, if a nurse data set, if you can strip out all of the nurses' PII data that identifies a nurse, like date of birth, SSN, or anything else, and replace that with an ID, and that's it.

Now, you can identify the nurse with that ID, and you don't have to have the nurse's PII data in your data set. Now, think about two different hospital systems who are engaged in some kind of a research, and they want to be able to exchange the data set. Well, in the past, folks like me, CIOs, and CISOs, and everybody else says, "No, no, no, you are not going to exchange the nurse data set with the PII data in it."

That's potential data security. Now, the hospital systems can say, "We don't have any PII data. The only thing I have is a unique number which happens to identify the nurse." And this way, researchers all across the country, if they consume the ID for the nurse, can replace the nurse's PII data with the ID, and freely exchange the data for research purposes.

That's what gives security to the data set. That's the first thing. The second part is that our northern neighbor, namely Canada, that is the first country that we have the nursing regulatory boards, member of NCSBN, and we are working with them very diligently to assign a unique nurse identifier.

And that happens to be the same NCSBN ID. We have to make sure that the unique nurse identifier assigned to the nurses in Canada do not have a duplication here in the U.S. So, we are actually thinking globally ahead of time. So, if a nurse in Ontario is assigned a unique nurse identifier NCSBN ID, then the same nurse, if that nurse happens to have a license in Maine, should have the same NCSBN ID.

That is what I believe Nancy mentioned. That is what I believe Whende looked in a crystal ball and mentioned that. Having one ID globally in the nursing world is going to really further a lot of the nursing research, practice, and a lot more.

The second thing is we also have not only nurses in practice, but nurses who are in the education process, who, as Susan stated, aren't aware of the fact that they have this number, or they'll be receiving this number.

So we have some basic education and groundwork we can do to help educate the nursing community. And lastly, I would say the use of the unique nurse identifier can help us to really tie to better patient outcomes, and learn more information about nursing overall. And I think those things will contribute to elevating the practice of nursing.

- So it sounds like what I'm hearing is know that you have the NCSBN ID, use it, and encourage others to use it.

- Exactly.

- Okay. Well, I think that's really the perfect thought to close on today. Thanks to all our panelists for their expertise, and all the hard work they've done to promote the importance and value of the NCSBN ID. We learned quite a bit today about the NCSBN ID. We know it's something all nurses already have. It supports interoperability across all data systems. It protects personal information.

It's the only identifier specifically for nurses, and it stays with them throughout their entire career. We've also heard a lot about the many ways the NCSBN ID can support research, improve patient outcomes, and address workforce needs. Finally, you can obtain the NCSBN ID free of charge and immediately through our Nursys website at nursys.com. Thanks to all of our panelists, and thanks to all of you for joining us today.