



## Frequently Asked Questions

### The PMIX National Architecture

#### ***What is the PMIX National Architecture?***

The Prescription Monitoring Information Exchange (PMIX) National Architecture is a formal set of technical requirements that existing and future interstate data hubs need to comply with to enable hub to hub communication. A critical component of the architecture is the use of open standards (IT design elements that are in the public domain and available free of charge). Adopting open standards helps ensure a state's ability to remain flexible and reduce costs.

#### ***What is the background for the creation of the PMIX National Architecture?***

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has, for years, supported the development of consensus-based national standards, known as PMIX specifications, to enable prescription Monitoring Programs (PMPs) to share data with each other. The PMIX specifications were developed as a direct response to the concerns and needs expressed by states who were members of the BJA/IJIS PMP Committee. While the PMIX specifications were being developed, BJA further supported the creation of an operational interstate data sharing hub known as the RxCheck hub (originally called the PMIX hub but has been renamed to avoid confusion between the architecture and the hub) to implement the PMIX specifications and deliver a functional interstate data sharing hub. During the early years of the RxCheck hub development, the BJA/IJIS PMP Committee was not aware of any other organizations interested in developing an interstate data sharing hub; however that is not the case today. Currently, there are two operational hubs with the possibility of others in the future.

#### ***What Interstate Data Sharing Hubs exist today?***

There are two interstate data sharing hubs currently in operations today with the possibility of additional hubs being developed in the future. The two operational hubs are the RxCheck hub and the PMP Interconnect (PMPi) hub. The RxCheck hub was developed by the IJIS Institute with funding by BJA, and the PMPi hub was developed by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP). Both the RxCheck and PMPi hubs will employ the PMIX National Architecture. Along with the two operational

hubs, there is a potential for other hub solutions to be developed. One such solution being considered is the sharing of PMP reports through Health Information Exchanges (HIE's) which are funded by the federal government and are being established in the states. Also, there are several private vendors who provide PMP services. These vendors currently have the ability to share PMP data among the states utilizing the vendors' services. To the benefit of the states, several of these vendors currently have PMIX National Architecture capability.

***What is the difference between the PMIX National Architecture and a Hub?***

A hub is a server owned and operated by an entity with which a state PMP interfaces to send and receive data from other states' PMPs. The PMIX National Architecture is a set of design requirements or standards that hubs (servers) must adhere in order to maintain interoperability among hubs.

***Why is the PMIX National Architecture Needed?***

The PMIX National Architecture empowers a state to choose a hub (RxCheck, PMPi, etc.) which meets the particular needs of that state and is best suited to support its PMP program. In addition, it provides that state with the confidence and assurance that the hub, it has chosen, will be capable of facilitating data sharing with another state that has chosen a different hub. This will assist states in avoiding costly rework or having to develop an interface with several hubs in order to share with other states. The PMIX National Architecture establishes a rigorous, standards-based approach to ensure all hubs are interoperable (i.e. the RxCheck hub can communicate with the PMPi hub and both hubs can communicate with future hubs). Therefore, the PMIX specifications which are currently the foundation of both RxCheck and PMPi hubs, needs to be formalized into a PMIX National Architecture.

The PMIX National Architecture is also needed because under current BJA policy, states that have received Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (HRPDMP) enhancement grants to develop interstate data sharing capability can currently only use such funds for interstate data sharing through the RxCheck hub. The RxCheck is the only hub BJA considers confirmed as being fully compliant with all PMIX specifications. Furthermore, should a state choose a hub, other than the RxCheck hub, that does not conform to the PMIX National Architecture, the state may not apply the grant funds to any other purpose. BJA has stated, however, that it will review its current policy if a state chooses an interstate data hub, other than the RxCheck hub, and the alternative hub is validated as

supporting all PMIX specifications (PMIX National Architecture).

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/PDMPInterstateDataSharing.pdf>

Therefore, the Alliance is working to establish the PMIX National Architecture to 1) enable states to decide which hub is best for their needs, 2) ensure interoperability among the hubs, and 3) work with BJA to allow states to use their grant funds to develop interstate data solution and connect to whichever hub they desire.

***What role does the Alliance have in the PMIX Architecture to ensure that different interstate data sharing hubs can communicate with each other?***

BJA asked the Alliance to take a leadership role in developing and maintaining the PMIX National Architecture. It was BJA's determination that the Alliance is the most logical organization to manage the PMIX National Architecture since it has broad representation from all affected state PMP agencies. BJA has also asked the Alliance to create a process by which other hubs may be certified or validated as compliant with the PMIX National Architecture. At the request of BJA, the Alliance, in partnership with Brandeis University's Training and Technical Assistance Center hosted a meeting in Washington D.C. on August 18, 2011 to begin the process of creating a PMIX National Architecture. Seven (7) states were invited to attend the meeting along with several federal agencies, national organizations, and vendors who are stakeholders in the interstate data sharing hubs. The purpose of the meeting was for the states to determine if a PMIX National Architecture was needed, what components should be included in the Architecture and to provide a set of recommendations for consideration by the Alliance Executive Board.

In a unanimous decision, the states represented at the meeting recommended the following:

1. A PMIX National Architecture is necessary
2. The PMIX National Architecture should consist of four (4) elements:
  - a) Global Reference Architecture Profile
  - b) Common NIEM exchange data, metadata (for business rules), and exceptions
  - c) Hub connections (Hub to Hub capability)
  - d) End-to-end security (including encryption key management)

3. The Alliance should convene a Technical Committee to resolve the remaining technical issues surrounding the PMIX Architecture
4. The Alliance should establish a Governance Committee to maintain and administer the PMIX National Architecture

***Who are the stakeholders with whom the Alliance is working to develop the PMIX National Architecture?***

The following stakeholders attended the meeting on August 18, 2011 in Washington D.C., some of whom the Alliance continues to work with:

- Member States – Alabama , California, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, & Oklahoma
- Federal Agencies – Bureau of Justice Assistance, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of the National Coordinator, Office of National Drug Control Policy, and Indian Health Services
- Organizations – National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and IJIS Institute
- Vendors- Appriss, Open Networks, BruckEdwards, Global Sage Group, Optimum Technology, Relay- Health, and Health Information Designs.

***Has a Technical Committee been convened by the Alliance?***

The Alliance Board has approved the establishment of the Technical Committee. The committee is chaired by Don Vogt, PMP Administrator (OK), and includes representatives from: Oklahoma, Ohio, Kentucky, BJA, IJIS, NABP, Open Networks, Appriss, Optimum Technology, and Health Information Designs. Meetings were held during the months of September and October. The committee has nearly completed its task of refining the PMIX National Architecture. Their recommendations for the architecture will be sent to the Alliance Executive Board for consideration.

***What plans does the Alliance have to administer and maintain the PMIX National Architecture?***

The Alliance Board approved the formation of a Governance Committee. The Alliance will be seeking volunteers from our membership to serve on this committee.

***Will the members of the Alliance have an opportunity to provide feedback on the PMIX National Architecture?***

This FAQ document is a first step towards informing the Alliance members about the PMIX National Architecture. The Alliance plans to provide our members sufficient and reliable information regarding the development process and the PMIX National Architecture to assist our members in making appropriate decisions. The Alliance encourages its members to review future information that will be distributed and to provide feedback to [assist@pmpalliance.org](mailto:assist@pmpalliance.org) or to Chris Baumgartner, Program Coordinator, at 360.556.7152.

***Will the members of the Alliance have an opportunity to vote on acceptance of the PMIX National Architecture?***

The Alliance Executive Board plans to review and make a decision on the recommended PMIX National Architecture. If the Board approves the architecture, it will be sent to Alliance members for review and acceptance.

***How do I provide feedback and get answers to additional questions I have?***

If you have additional questions or need to discuss the Architecture further, please feel free to contact the Alliance at [assist@pmpalliance.org](mailto:assist@pmpalliance.org) or 360.556.7152.

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