

1 Introduced by Committee on Health Care

2 Date:

3 Subject: Health; health information technology; Department of Vermont

4 Health Access; Vermont Information Technology Leaders; Green

5 Mountain Care Board; health information exchange

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the  
7 Department of Vermont Health Access and the Vermont Information  
8 Technology Leaders, Inc. (VITL) to submit to the General Assembly a work  
9 plan, a contingency plan, and bimonthly progress reports regarding their efforts  
10 to implement systemic improvements to health information technology and  
11 health information exchange in Vermont. It would also require them to  
12 provide testimony on their progress to the Health Reform Oversight  
13 Committee. It would shift responsibility for Vermont’s Health Information  
14 Technology Plan from the Agency of Administration to the Department of  
15 Vermont Health Access and require approval by the Green Mountain Care  
16 Board. The bill would extend a portion of the health care claims tax that is  
17 dedicated to health information technology through July 1, 2019. In the  
18 absence of contrary legislative action during the 2019 legislative session, it  
19 would also sunset VITL’s statutory authority on July 1, 2019, including  
20 VITL’s role as operator of the State’s health information exchange network  
21 and its eligibility to use funds from the Health IT-Fund.

1 An act relating to health information technology and health information  
2 exchange

3 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

4 Sec. 1. HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY; HEALTH  
5 INFORMATION EXCHANGE; PROGRESS REPORTS

6 (a) On or before May 1, 2018, the Department of Vermont Health Access  
7 and the Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc. (VITL) shall submit to  
8 the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on Ways and  
9 Means; the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Health and Welfare, and  
10 on Finance; and the Green Mountain Care Board a work plan detailing the  
11 process by which the Department and VITL shall implement the  
12 recommendations of the health information technology report submitted to the  
13 General Assembly in accordance with 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 73, Sec. 15  
14 (Act 73 report). The work plan shall be informed by stakeholder and consumer  
15 input and by technology options and opportunities. The Plan shall identify  
16 potential steps for addressing issues of data ownership and issues of  
17 intellectual property. It shall also set forth both a timeline of tasks to be  
18 completed and a list of clear objectives to assist the General Assembly in  
19 evaluating the success or failure of the parties' work.

20 (b) On or before September 1, 2018, the Department of Vermont Health  
21 Access and VITL shall submit to the House Committees on Appropriations, on  
22 Health Care, and on Ways and Means; the Senate Committees on

1 Appropriations, on Health and Welfare, and on Finance; the Health Reform  
2 Oversight Committee; and the Green Mountain Care Board a contingency plan  
3 for health information technology to be used if the Department and VITL are  
4 unable to implement the recommendations from the Act 73 report. The  
5 contingency plan shall contain the following:

6 (1) a description of the health information exchange services that would  
7 need to be replaced;

8 (2) a process for determining the manner in which the services would be  
9 replaced and the mechanism for acquiring the replacement services, such as a  
10 request for proposals;

11 (3) an assessment of the State’s ownership interests in hardware  
12 systems, software systems, applications, data, and other physical and  
13 intellectual property that would need to be licensed to a future operator of  
14 Vermont’s health information exchange;

15 (4) a plan for transitioning operations from VITL to the new operator or  
16 operators; and

17 (5) the impacts of the change on health care providers, health care  
18 consumers, State government, and Vermont’s health care reform initiatives.

19 (c) On or before October 15, 2018, the Department of Vermont Health  
20 Access shall submit to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health  
21 Care, and on Ways and Means; the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on

1 Health and Welfare, and on Finance; the Health Reform Oversight Committee;  
2 and the Green Mountain Care Board the results of an evaluation, which shall  
3 be conducted by an independent entity with expertise in health information  
4 technology, of the work plan, the contingency plan, and the Department's and  
5 VITL's progress toward implementing the recommendations in the Act 73  
6 report.

7 (d) On or before May 1, July 1, September 1, and November 1, 2018 and  
8 January 1, 2019, the Department of Vermont Health Access and VITL shall  
9 provide to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Health Care, and on  
10 Ways and Means; the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Health and  
11 Welfare, and on Finance; the Health Reform Oversight Committee; and the  
12 Green Mountain Care Board written updates on their progress toward  
13 implementing the recommendations contained in the Act 73 report.

14 (e) In addition to the written updates required by subsection (d) of this  
15 section, the Department of Vermont Health Access and VITL shall provide  
16 testimony on their progress toward implementing the recommendations  
17 contained in the Act 73 report at a meeting of the Health Reform Oversight  
18 Committee at least once every two months or more frequently if so requested  
19 by the Committee. The testimony at the Committee's first meeting after the  
20 General Assembly has adjourned in 2018 shall also include information  
21 regarding the work plan required by subsection (a) of this section, and the

1 testimony at the Committee’s first meeting after September 1, 2018 shall also  
2 include information regarding the contingency plan required by subsection (b)  
3 of this section.

4 Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 9351 is amended to read:

5 § 9351. HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PLAN

6 (a)(1) ~~The Secretary of Administration or designee~~ Department of Vermont  
7 Health Access, in consultation with the Department’s Health Information  
8 Exchange Steering Committee, shall be responsible for the overall  
9 coordination of Vermont’s statewide Health Information Technology Plan.

10 The Plan shall be revised annually and updated comprehensively every five  
11 years to provide a strategic vision for clinical health information technology.

12 (2) The Department shall submit the proposed Plan to the Green  
13 Mountain Care Board annually on or before November 1. The Green  
14 Mountain Care Board shall approve, modify, or request modifications to the  
15 Plan within 45 days following its submission; if the Board has taken no action  
16 after 45 days, the Plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

17 (3) ~~The Secretary or designee~~ Department, in consultation with the  
18 Steering Committee, shall administer the Plan, which shall include the  
19 implementation of an integrated electronic health information infrastructure for  
20 the sharing of electronic health information among health care facilities, health  
21 care professionals, public and private payers, and patients. The Plan shall

1 include standards and protocols designed to promote patient education, patient  
2 privacy, physician best practices, electronic connectivity to health care data,  
3 and, overall, a more efficient and less costly means of delivering quality health  
4 care in Vermont.

5 \* \* \*

6 (c) ~~The Secretary of Administration or designee may update the Plan~~  
7 Department of Vermont Health Access, in consultation with the Steering  
8 Committee and subject to Green Mountain Care Board approval, may propose  
9 updates to the Plan in addition to the annual updates as needed to reflect  
10 emerging technologies, the State’s changing needs, and such other areas as the  
11 ~~Secretary or designee~~ Department deems appropriate. The ~~Secretary or~~  
12 ~~designee~~ Department shall solicit recommendations from ~~Vermont Information~~  
13 ~~Technology Leaders, Inc. (VITL) and other entities~~ interested stakeholders in  
14 order to ~~update~~ propose updates to the Health Information Technology Plan  
15 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and to this subsection, including  
16 applicable standards, protocols, and pilot programs, and following approval of  
17 the proposed updates by the Green Mountain Care Board, may enter into a  
18 contract or grant agreement with ~~VITL or other~~ appropriate entities to update  
19 some or all of the Plan. Upon approval ~~by the Secretary of the updated Plan by~~  
20 the Green Mountain Care Board, the Department of Vermont Health Access  
21 shall distribute the updated Plan ~~shall be distributed~~ to the Secretary of

1 Administration; the Commissioner of Information and Innovation; the  
2 Commissioner of Financial Regulation; ~~the Commissioner of Vermont Health~~  
3 ~~Access~~; the Secretary of Human Services; the Commissioner of Health; the  
4 Commissioner of Mental Health; the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and  
5 Independent Living; the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare; the House  
6 Committee on Health Care; affected parties; and interested stakeholders.

7 Unless major modifications are required, the ~~Secretary~~ Department may  
8 present updated information about the Plan to the ~~Green Mountain Care Board~~  
9 ~~and~~ legislative committees of jurisdiction in lieu of creating a written report.

10 \* \* \*

11 Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 9352 is amended to read:

12 § 9352. VERMONT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LEADERS

13 \* \* \*

14 (c)(1) Health information exchange operation. VITL shall be designated in  
15 the Health Information Technology Plan approved by the Green Mountain  
16 Care Board pursuant to section 9351 of this title to operate the exclusive  
17 statewide health information exchange network for this State. The Plan shall  
18 determine the manner in which Vermont's health information exchange  
19 network shall be managed. ~~After the~~ The Green Mountain Care Board  
20 ~~approves~~ shall have the authority to approve VITL's ~~core activities and~~ budget  
21 pursuant to chapter 220 of this title, ~~the Secretary of Administration or~~

1 ~~designee shall enter into procurement grant agreements with VITL pursuant to~~  
2 ~~8 V.S.A. § 4089k.~~ Nothing in this chapter shall impede local community  
3 providers from the exchange of electronic medical data.

4 (2) Notwithstanding any provision of 3 V.S.A. § 2222 or 2283b to the  
5 contrary, upon request of the Secretary of Administration, the Department of  
6 Information and Innovation shall review VITL’s technology for security,  
7 privacy, and interoperability with State government information technology,  
8 consistent with the State’s health information technology plan required by  
9 section 9351 of this title.

10 (d) Privacy. The standards and protocols implemented by VITL shall be  
11 consistent with those adopted by the statewide Health Information Technology  
12 Plan pursuant to subsection 9351(e) of this title.

13 (e) Report. ~~No later than~~ On or before January 15 of each year, VITL shall  
14 file a report with the Green Mountain Care Board; the Secretary of  
15 Administration; the Commissioner of Information and Innovation; the  
16 Commissioner of Financial Regulation; the Commissioner of Vermont Health  
17 Access; the Secretary of Human Services; the Commissioner of Health; the  
18 Commissioner of Mental Health; the Commissioner of Disabilities, Aging, and  
19 Independent Living; the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare; and the  
20 House Committee on Health Care. The report shall include an assessment of  
21 progress in implementing health information technology in Vermont and



1 recommendations for additional funding and legislation required. In addition,  
2 VITL shall publish minutes of VITL meetings and any other relevant  
3 information on a public website. The provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d)  
4 (expiration of required reports) shall not apply to the report to be made under  
5 this subsection.

6 (f) Funding authorization. VITL is authorized to seek matching funds to  
7 assist with carrying out the purposes of this section. In addition, it may accept  
8 any and all donations, gifts, and grants of money, equipment, supplies,  
9 materials, and services from the federal or any local government, or any  
10 agency thereof, and from any person, firm, foundation, or corporation for any  
11 of its purposes and functions under this section and may receive and use the  
12 same, subject to the terms, conditions, and regulations governing such  
13 donations, gifts, and grants. VITL shall not use any State funds for health care  
14 consumer advertising, marketing, or similar services unless necessary to  
15 comply with the terms of a contract or grant that requires a contribution of  
16 State funds.

17 (g) Waivers. The Secretary of ~~Administration~~ Human Services or  
18 designee, in consultation with VITL, may seek any waivers of federal law, of  
19 rule, or of regulation that might assist with implementation of this section.

20 (h) [Repealed.]

21 (i) Certification of meaningful use and connectivity.

1           (1) To the extent necessary to support Vermont’s health care reform  
2 goals or as required by federal law, VITL shall be authorized to certify the  
3 meaningful use of health information technology and electronic health records  
4 by health care providers licensed in Vermont.

5           (2) VITL, in consultation with health care providers and health care  
6 facilities, shall establish criteria for creating or maintaining connectivity to the  
7 State’s health information exchange network. VITL shall provide the criteria  
8 annually ~~by~~ on or before March 1 to the Green Mountain Care Board  
9 established pursuant to chapter 220 of this title.

10          (j) Scope of activities. VITL and any person who serves as a member,  
11 director, officer, or employee of VITL with or without compensation shall not  
12 be considered a health care provider as defined in subdivision 9432 of this title  
13 for purposes of any action taken in good faith pursuant to or in reliance upon  
14 provisions of this section relating to VITL’s:

15           (1) governance;

16           (2) electronic exchange of health information and operation of the  
17 statewide Health Information Exchange Network as long as nothing in such  
18 exchange or operation constitutes the practice of medicine pursuant to  
19 26 V.S.A. chapter 23 or 33;

20           (3) implementation of privacy provisions;

21           (4) funding authority;

1 (5) application for waivers of federal law;

2 (6) establishment and operation of a financing program providing  
3 electronic health records systems to providers; or

4 (7) certification of health care providers' meaningful use of health  
5 information technology.

6 Sec. 4. 18 V.S.A. § 9375(b) is amended to read:

7 (b) The Board shall have the following duties:

8 \* \* \*

9 (2)(A) Review and approve Vermont's statewide Health Information  
10 Technology Plan pursuant to section 9351 of this title to ensure that the  
11 necessary infrastructure is in place to enable the State to achieve the principles  
12 expressed in section 9371 of this title. ~~In performing its review, the Board  
13 shall consult with and consider any recommendations regarding the plan  
14 received from the Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc. (VITL).~~

15 (B) Review and approve the criteria required for health care  
16 providers and health care facilities to create or maintain connectivity to the  
17 State's health information exchange as set forth in section 9352 of this title.  
18 Within 90 days following this approval, the Board shall issue an order  
19 explaining its decision.

20 (C) Annually review ~~the budget and all activities of VITL~~ and  
21 approve the budget, consistent with available funds, ~~and the core activities~~

1 ~~associated with public funding, which shall include establishing the~~  
2 ~~interconnectivity of electronic medical records held by health care~~  
3 ~~professionals and the storage, management, and exchange of data received~~  
4 ~~from such health care professionals, for the purpose of improving the quality of~~  
5 ~~and efficiently providing health care to Vermonters of the Vermont~~  
6 Information Technology Leaders, Inc. (VITL). This review shall take into  
7 account VITL’s responsibilities pursuant to section 9352 of this title and the  
8 availability of funds needed to support those responsibilities.

9 \* \* \*

10 Sec. 5. 2013 Acts and Resolves No. 73, Sec. 60(10), as amended by 2017 Acts  
11 and Resolves No. 73, Sec. 14, is further amended to read:

12 (10) Secs. 48-51 (health claims tax) shall take effect on July 1, 2013 and  
13 52 and 53 (health claims tax revenue; Health IT-Fund; sunset) shall take effect  
14 on July 1, ~~2018~~ 2019.

15 Sec. 6. PROSPECTIVE REPEAL OF VITL STATUTE

16 In order to ensure successful implementation of the Act 73 report  
17 recommendations as set forth in the work plan developed pursuant to Sec. 1 of  
18 this act, and in the absence of 2019 legislative action to the contrary, 18 V.S.A.  
19 § 9352 is repealed on July 1, 2019.

20 Sec. 7. 32 V.S.A. § 10301 is amended to read:

21 § 10301. HEALTH IT-FUND

1           (a) The Vermont Health IT-Fund is established in the State Treasury as a  
2           special fund to be a source of funding for Medical Health Care Information  
3           Technology Programs and initiatives such as those outlined in the Vermont  
4           Health Information Technology Plan administered by the ~~Secretary of~~  
5           ~~Administration or designee~~ Department of Vermont Health Access. One  
6           hundred percent of the Fund shall be disbursed for the advancement of health  
7           information technology adoption and utilization in Vermont as appropriated by  
8           the General Assembly, less any disbursements relating to the administration of  
9           the Fund. The Fund shall be used for loans and grants to health care providers  
10          pursuant to section 10302 of this chapter and for the development of programs  
11          and initiatives sponsored by ~~VHITL~~ and State entities designed to promote and  
12          improve health care information technology, including:

13               (1) a program to provide electronic health information systems and  
14               practice management systems for health care and human service practitioners  
15               in Vermont;

16               (2) financial support for ~~VHITL~~ to build and operate the health  
17               information exchange network;

18               (3) implementation of the Blueprint for Health information technology  
19               initiatives, related public and mental health initiatives, and the advanced  
20               medical home and community care team project; and

1 (4) consulting services for installation, integration, and clinical process  
2 ~~re-engineering~~ reengineering relating to the utilization of health-care  
3 information technology such as electronic health records.

4 \* \* \*

5 (e) ~~VITL and any other~~ Any entity requesting disbursements from the  
6 Health IT-Fund shall develop a detailed annual plan for proposed expenditures  
7 from the Health IT-Fund for the upcoming fiscal year. The expenditure plan  
8 shall be included within the context of the entity's overall budget, including all  
9 revenue and expenditures.

10 \* \* \*

11 (h) ~~VITL and any other~~ Any beneficiary receiving funding shall submit  
12 quarterly expenditure reports to the Secretary of Administration and to the  
13 Green Mountain Care Board, including a year-end report ~~by~~ on or before  
14 August 1.

15 (i) Any primary care practitioner receiving an electronic health information  
16 system, practice management system, or both pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) of  
17 this section shall maximize usage of such system ~~in accordance with the~~  
18 ~~guidelines developed by~~ VITL. A practitioner who is determined ~~by~~ VITL to  
19 be using the system to less than its full capacity shall be provided with an  
20 opportunity for additional instruction as needed to enable full usage of the  
21 system. If a practitioner is unwilling or unable to utilize the system to its full

1 capacity, such practitioner shall refund to ~~VITL~~ the State the fair market value  
2 of the system.

3 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATES

4 (a) Secs. 1–6 and this section shall take effect on passage.

5 (b) Sec. 7 (32 V.S.A. § 10301) shall take effect on July 1, 2019, but only if  
6 the repeal of 18 V.S.A. § 9352 occurs as set forth in Sec. 6.