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**Zdravstvena informatika - Komunikacija z elektronskimi zdravstvenimi zapisi - 4.
del: Varnost (ISO 13606-4:2026)**

Health informatics - Electronic health record communication - Part 4: Security (ISO 13606-4:2026)

Medizinische Informatik - Kommunikation von Patientendaten in elektronischer Form -
Teil 4: Sicherheit (ISO 13606-4:2026)

Informatique de santé - Communication du dossier de santé informatisé - Partie 4:
Sécurité (ISO 13606-4:2026)

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35.240.80	Uporabniške rešitve IT v zdravstveni tehniki	IT applications in health care technology

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EUROPEAN STANDARD
NORME EUROPÉENNE
EUROPÄISCHE NORM

EN ISO 13606-4

September 2026

ICS 35.240.80

Supersedes EN ISO 13606-4:2019

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**Health informatics - Electronic health record
communication - Part 4: Security (ISO 13606-4:2026)**

Informatique de santé - Communication du dossier de
santé informatisé - Partie 4: Sécurité (ISO 13606-
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Medizinische Informatik - Kommunikation von
Patientendaten in elektronischer Form - Teil 4:
Sicherheit (ISO 13606-4:2026)

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CEN-CENELEC Management Centre: Rue de la Science 23, B-1040 Brussels

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European foreword

This document (EN ISO 13606-4:2026) has been prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 215 "Health informatics" in collaboration with Technical Committee CEN/TC 251 "Health informatics" the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by March 2027, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by March 2027.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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International Standard

ISO 13606-4

Health informatics — Electronic health record communication —

Part 4: Security

*Informatique de santé — Communication du dossier de santé
informatisé —*

Partie 4: Sécurité

**Second edition
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CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 215, *Health informatics*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 251, *Health informatics*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 13606-4:2019 [\[1\]](#)), of which it constitutes a minor revision. The changes are as follows:

- the tables in [Clause 7](#) and [Clause 8](#) have been numbered;
- the examples in [Annex B](#) have been anonymized;
- corrections were made to [Clause 2](#) and [Clause 3](#) to reflect the technical content of the document.

A list of all parts in the ISO 13606 [\[2\]](#) series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Introduction

0.1 General

This document is part of a series including five parts. In this document, dependency upon any of the other parts of this series is explicitly stated where it applies.

0.2 Challenge addressed by this document

The communication of electronic health records (EHRs) in whole or in part, within and across organisational boundaries, and sometimes across national borders, is challenging from a security perspective. Health records should be created, processed and managed in ways that assure the confidentiality of their contents and legitimate control by subjects of care in how they are used. Around the globe, these principles are progressively becoming enshrined in national data protection legislation. These instruments declare that the subject of care has the right to play a pivotal role in decisions on the content and distribution of their EHR, as well as the right to be informed of its contents. The communication of health record information to third parties should normally take place only with consent from the subject of care (which can be any freely-given specific and informed indication of their wishes, by which the data subject signifies their agreement to personal data relating to them being processed in an ethically-acceptable way). More details can be found in ISO 22600-3 [3]. For EHR communication across national borders, ISO 22857 [4] provides guidance that can be used to define appropriate security policy specifications.

Ideally, each fine-grained entry in a subject of care's record should only be accessed by those persons who have permissions to view that information, specified by or approved by the subject of care and reflecting the dynamic nature of the set of persons with legitimate duty of care towards the subject of care through their lifetime. The access control list will ideally also include those persons who have permissions to access the data for reasons other than a duty of care (such as health service management, epidemiology and public health, consented research) but exclude any information that they do not need to see or which the subject of care feels is too personal for them to access. On the opposite side, the labelling by subjects of care or their representatives of information as personal or private should ideally not hamper those who legitimately need to see the information in an emergency, nor accidentally result in genuine healthcare providers having such a filtered perspective that they are misled into managing the subject of care inappropriately. Subject of care's views on the inherent sensitivity¹⁾ of entries in their health records can evolve over time, as their personal health anxieties alter or as societal attitudes to health problems change. Subjects of care might wish to offer some heterogeneous levels of access to family, friends, carers and members of their community. Families might wish to provide a means by which they are able to access parts of each other's records (but not necessarily to equal extents) in order to monitor the progress of inherited conditions within a family tree.

Such a set of requirements is arguably more extensive than that required of the data controllers in most other industry sectors. It is in practice made extremely complex by:

- the large number of health record entries made on a subject of care during the course of modern healthcare;
- the large number of healthcare personnel, often rotating through posts, who can potentially come into contact with a subject of care at any one time;
- the large number of healthcare organisations with which a subject of care can come into contact during their lifetime;
- the difficulty (for a subject of care or for anyone else) of classifying in a standardized way how sensitive a record entry can be;
- the difficulty of determining how important a single health record entry can be to the future care of a subject of care, and to which classes of user;

1) The term sensitivity is widely used in the security domain for a broad range of safeguards and controls, but in this document the term refers only to the characteristic of a resource (EHR data) that implies its value or importance (and by implication the extent of confidentiality and therefore to the functional roles that should have access to it).

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- the logically indelible nature of the EHR and the need for revisions to access permissions to be rigorously managed in the same way as revisions to the EHR entries themselves;
- the need to determine appropriate access very rapidly, in real time, and potentially in a distributed computing environment;
- the high level of concern expressed by a growing minority of subjects of care to have their consent for disclosure recorded and respected;
- the low level of concern the majority of subjects of care have about these requirements, which has historically limited the priority and investment committed to tackling this aspect of EHR communications.

To support interoperable EHRs, and seamless communication of EHR data between healthcare providers, the negotiation required to determine if a given Requester for EHR data should be permitted to receive the data should be capable of automation. If automated negotiation were not possible, the delays and workload of managing human decisions for all or most record communications would obviate any value in striving for data interoperability.

The main principles of the approach to standards development in the area of EHR communications access control are to match the characteristics and parameters of a request to the EHR provider's policies, and to any access control or consent declarations within the specified EHR, to maintain appropriate evidence of the disclosure, and to make the overall access decision process capable of automated processing. In practice, efforts are in progress to develop international standards for defining access control and privilege management systems that would be capable of computer-to-computer negotiation. However, this kind of work is predicated upon health services agreeing a mutually consistent framework for defining the privileges they wish to assign to staff, and the spectrum of sensitivity they offer for subjects of care to define within their EHRs. This requires consistency in the way the relevant information is expressed, to make this sensibly scalable at definition-time (when new EHR entries are being added), at run-time (when a whole EHR is being retrieved or queried), and durable over a subject of care's lifetime. It is also important to recognize that, for the foreseeable future, diversity will continue to exist between countries on the specific approaches to securing EHR communications, including differing legislation, and that a highly prescriptive approach to standardization is not presently possible.

This document therefore does not prescribe the access rules themselves. It does not specify who should have access to what and by means of which security mechanisms; these need to be determined by user communities, national guidelines and legislation. However, it does define a basic framework that can be used as a minimum specification of EHR access policy, and a richer generic representation for the communication of more fine-grained detailed policy information. This framework complements the overall architecture defined in ISO 13606-1 [5], and defines specific information structures that are to be communicated as part of an EHR_EXTRACT defined in ISO 13606-1 [5]. Some of the kinds of agreement necessary for the security of EHR communication are inevitably outside the scope of this document, and are covered more extensively in the ISO 22600 [6] series.

It should be noted that there are a number of explicit and implicit dependencies on use of other standards alongside this document, for overall cohesion of an interoperable information security deployment. In addition to agreement about the complete range of appropriate standards, a relevant assurance regime would be required (which is beyond the scope of this document).

0.3 Communication scenarios

0.3.1 Data flows

The interfaces and message models required to support EHR communication are the subject of ISO 13606-5 [7]. The description here is an overview of the communications process in order to show the interactions for which security features are needed. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the key data flows and scenarios that are considered by this document. For each key data flow there will be an acknowledgement response, and optionally a rejection may be returned instead of the requested data.