

Sponsoring Organisation:	Proposed Implementation Date: 01 July 2010
Department of Health	Subject: Notification: AIDC - Bar Code for Patient Identifiers on the Identity Band
ADVANCE NOTIFICATION	
<p>This gives advance notification of the approval of a requirement for a new information standard by the Information Standards Board for Health and Social Care (ISB). ISB approved this at its meeting on 29 July 2009.</p>	
Summary: <p>The proposed standard defines the procedures necessary to bar code patient identifiers on the identity band in all healthcare settings where an identity band is worn by the patient.</p> <p>This standard will apply to all healthcare settings where an identity band is worn by the patient and system suppliers that develop and implement systems that result in the production of a patient identity band.</p> <p>Subject to the approval of the Full standard by ISB, NHS organisations and those organisations delivering NHS commissioned services deploying bar coding systems for patient identifiers on the identity band will be expected to comply with the standard by 01 July 2011.</p> <p>Related DSCN's: the human readable core identifiers on the patient's wristband was approved as a standard by the ISB on 18 March 2009 and issued as DSCN 04/2009 – Patient Identifiers for Identity Bands.</p>	
<p>The Information Standards Board for Health and Social Care (ISB) is responsible for approving information standards.</p>	

ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF A FUTURE DATA SET CHANGE NOTICE

Reference No:	AN0907
Version No:	1.0
Subject:	Bar Code for Patient Identifiers on the Identity Band
Type of Change:	Advance Notification
Proposed Implementation Date:	01 July 2010
Business Justification:	This standard will address the lack of bar codes for the identification of patients on the identity band. The procedures and processes required by the standard will ensure that patients can be identified by auto-identification and data capture (AIDC) techniques thus reducing risks of misidentification, improving patient safety and improved patient care. The standard is effectively a 'building block' that will enable applications and procedures associated with patient treatment e.g. blood sampling, theatre procedures, medication administering, to ensure safe and certain patient identification as part of these processes.

This Advance Notification heralds the introduction of a bar code standard for the auto-identification of patients using the identity band. The purpose of the standard is to define the procedures and processes necessary for the deployment of a bar code in standard form on the patient's identity band to ensure the safe and certain identification of the patient using auto-identification techniques.

Submission of the Full Standard to ISB is planned for 01 July 2010. If approved, the related DSCN will be issued with a mandate for full compliance across the NHS of 01 July 2011.

Background

In February 2007, the Department of Health (DH) published the policy document "Coding for Success" which stated that auto-identification and data capture techniques should be deployed throughout the NHS, based upon the GS1 standards for identification numbers, bar codes and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags. These standards are in wide use across all sectors of commerce and industry globally with broad use in the healthcare sector in many countries around the world.

At the time of the DH announcement GS1 UK, the representative body of GS1 in the UK, confirmed an agreement with NHS Connecting for Health (NHS CFH) for free access to the standards to NHS organisations. This deployment, for the bar coding of the human readable patient identification data on the identity band, is one of the early adopter applications of this roll-out programme.

The accuracy of patient identification is seen as one of the fundamental building blocks of "the five rights" (right patient, right medicine, right dosage, right route, right frequency) - the founding principles of safer patient care. It is commonly recognized throughout the NHS and indeed worldwide in healthcare organisations, that thousands of patients are harmed or indeed die each year due to medication errors and sometimes surgical errors due to misidentification of the patient. See "Right Patient Right Care" published by the NPSA 2004 and "Spoonful of Sugar" published by the National Audit Commission 2001.

Current practice in the NHS today is typically to identify the patient using handwritten human readable text on the wristband describing a variety of identification information including data items such as name, address, gender, ward, date of birth, etc., defined according to locally specified rules. Consequently, the quality of the identification data can easily be negatively impacted by general wear and tear, excessive moisture, smudging and similar adverse events leading to misreads and increased risk of misidentification. Additionally, being human readable, misidentification can occur by simple human error.

In order to introduce some standardisation into the identification process, the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) has issued guidance on the use of human-readable (text based) identification information on the wristband – Safer Practice Notice #24 refers (dated 03 July 2007) and supplemented by NPSA/2008/SPN001 (dated 18 September 2008) on the risks of not using the NHS Number as the national identifier for all patients – see ‘*Risk to patient safety of not using the NHS Number as the national identifier for all patients*’ at

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/publicationsandstatistics/publications/publicationspolicyandguidance/dh_066082.

This guidance specifies the use of four core identifiers, all in human readable form – the patient’s last name, first name, date of birth and NHS Number and, if required according to local decision, a locally recognised identification number, such as a hospital number. This was approved by the ISB on 18 March 2009 and DSCN 04/2009 issued. The conformance date is 31 December 2010.

The NPSA SPN #24 required the adoption of this practice by July 2009 and the use of NHS Number as the primary patient identifier by 18 September 2009. Use of bar codes on the wristband will enable the benefits of auto-identification and data capture to be realised – the removal of human intervention and its associated risks and increased efficiency of the patient identification process, all adding to safer patient care and greater convenience for staff and patients alike.

The proposed standard for bar codes for patient identifiers on the identity band is entirely additional to, and complementary with, the human readable text as specified by the NPSA SPN #24. As such, this proposed standard is fully supported by the NPSA.

The bar code standard requires as a minimum that the same data set of the four core identifiers are carried in the bar code as that printed in human readable form. The standard is effectively an ‘enabler’ of associated applications - user systems associated with patient care such as medication administration, theatre procedures, etc. – that require as part of their processes the safe and certain identification of the patient. At this point the full benefits of this standard will be realised.

Details of Proposed Change

NHS organisations and those organisations delivering NHS commissioned services deploying bar coding systems for patient identifiers on the identity band will need to implement a bar code system that will enable them to print bar codes to GS1 standards on the identity band. This will require the procurement and installation of a software and hardware system at all points in the hospital where a patient wristband is printed e.g. at patient registration, together with the implementation of procedures to manage the system.

The bar code contents will include, at least, the four core identifiers as required by NPSA’s SPN #24. Note that the bar code is additional to the human readable text required by this SPN. Note too that there will be no data symbolised in the bar code that will not be reflected on the patient’s wristband in human readable form.

The bar code will be printed at the same time as the human readable text is printed.

Potential Effect on Other Information Standards

Nil

Timelines

NHS CFH and GS1 UK support arrangements are currently in place and initial implementations are underway – in some hospitals, roll-out of the standard in multiple wards is well underway. Subject to approval of the Full standard, all hospitals undertaking healthcare procedures where identity bands are required will be expected to be fully conformant with the standard by 01 July 2011.

Sponsor Details

Mike Yates, Deputy Head, Patient Safety Branch, Department of Health

Further Information and Support

Neil Lawrence, AIDC Project Manager, CFH. Email: neil.lawrence@nhs.net

or

Roger Lamb, Health Sector Manager, GS1 UK. Email: roger.lamb@gs1uk.org

Advance Notification