

# Draft Policy Guiding Principles (from 6/15/2015)

- Minimal Necessary
  - Rationale: There should be a core set of elements that we think are universally important, only standardize elements when the benefits outweigh the risks.
- Keep it simple
  - Rationale: Makes sense
- Start small
  - Rationale: We can test the impact of the most important changes before expanding.
- Change codes for existing data elements ONLY when a need exists
- Change codes for existing data elements ONLY when the benefits outweighs the risks
  - Rationale: Depending on the application, the codes can be mapped downstream. There will be no universally acceptable set of codes that will avoid the need for re-mapping, so harmonizing codes may not be the highest priority.
- When creating new codes, keep it as short text strings with 10 characters or less
  - Rationale: There is a high chance of error with the use of numeric codes when it comes to mapping
- When considering a new standard data element, try to use a short text string as the code where possible.
  - For example: instead of "1=CR" use "CR"
  - Rationale: Will prevent interference with groups' existing coding systems
- Change data elements ONLY when necessary
- Rationale: Changes will have impact (and associated cost) on existing systems if there are changes that do not justify the associated cost