IPv6 and the Rural Health Care Pilot Program

Background

IPv6, the next generation of the Internet Protocol, is gradually being
phased into networks in parallel with its predecessor, IPv4. The biggest
motivation for the deployment of IPv6 is the imminent exhaustion of the
available pool of IPv4 addresses. Other important factors include better
integration of features such as security and quality of service than in
IPv4.

The US government is committed to the adoption of IPv6 for its networks.
The best exposition of the requirements for IPv6 in civilian networks is in
NIST publication [USGV6]. This document references standards which are
expected to be met for nodes (both user and infrastructure devices) and
applications.

Because of the need for RHCPP networks to interoperate with both
non-governmental and governmental networks (in particular the Departments
of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs), now and in the future,
we strongly recommend that IPv6 be addressed at the outset of the RCHP
program. We suggest that language similar to the following be included in
RFPs for computer and networking hardware, applications and services.

Suggested Language

Organization expects that all computer and networking hardware, services
and applications will conform to the mandatory components of [USGV6] (or
later version at Organization's option). Vendor will provide explicit
details of non-conformance by any component along with a good-faith
estimate of when the component will be fully conformant.

Reference

[USGV6] A Profile for IPv6 in the US Government--Version 1.0:
Recommendations of the National Institute of Standards and Technology,
Special Publication 500-267 (Draft), DRAFT2-USGV6-V1.0, 23 January 2008.