A new Health Information Handler (HIH) who wishes to start submitting/receiving medical documentation utilizing the esMD system, needs to follow the below steps to build their own system:

1. Use one of the two options below to participate in the esMD Program:

   a) Build a compliant and CONNECT-compatible gateway.
   b) Understanding CONNECT and to download CONNECT software https://connectopensource.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/CW/overview

   If building a gateway is not feasible for your company a HIH can handle health information on behalf of a provider and submit medical documentation through the esMD system through their established gateway. For companies that wish to utilize this method to participate in the esMD program please see the link below:
   https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Computer-Data-and-Systems/ESMD/Which_HIHs_Plan_to_Offer_Gateway_Services_to_Providers

2. Review section 2 titled "esMD Onboarding process for HIHs" in the **HIH Implementation Guide** for further steps on how to onboard onto the esMD system.

   a) The HIH Implementation guide can be found in the HIH section on the esMD website.
   b) Please see the link below:
   https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Computer-Data-and-Systems/ESMD/Information_for_HIHs

   ***Please note:** The esMD Support Team does not assist prospective HIHs with building their gateways. CMS recommends that the prospective HIH ensure they have an experienced technical staff to expedite all testing tasks and review the esMD HIH Implementation Guide (PDF) and the X12 Transaction Companion Guide and Codes (PDF). Knowledge of CONNECT software and the Simple Object Access Process (SOAP) User Interface (UI) tool is also helpful.*

3. Once the Gateway is made ready, HIHs can then begin the esMD onboarding process.

4. HIHs need to submit a completed **esMD HIH Onboarding Request Form** and **HIH Agreement Form** by using the link below.

a) Review the *esMD HIH Agreement* instructions which show the steps that must be completed before submitting the esMD HIH Agreement form.

This document can also be found using the link below:
https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Computer-Data-and-Systems/ESMD/Information_for_HIHs

5. After completing the forms, please send it to the esMD Service Desk (esMD_Support@cms.hhs.gov) with all requested attachments.

Please note: To ensure the integrity of the request form, your security certificates must be added to this form by copy/paste, not as a separate attachment.

6. Once the forms reviewed and accepted, the configuration and testing phase will begin between the HIH and members of the esMD support Team. Those phases are listed below:
   a) **UAT environment Configuration Phase**
   b) **Connectivity Testing Phase**
      Functional and End to End Testing Phase
   c) **Production environment Configuration Phase**

There is no set timeframe from start to completion of the esMD Onboarding process, as configuration to the esMD system and testing of an HIH differs based on each company and their technical staff. If you have any questions related to esMD please contact the esMD Service Desk (esMD_Support@cms.hhs.gov).