

January 16, 2009

Dear Member of Congress,

The eHealth Initiative, an independent, non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization and the undersigned groups, representing every sector of health care, urge you to support the inclusion of funding for effective health information technology (IT) adoption that effectively manages privacy and security that supports improvements in the quality, safety and efficiency of our nation's health care system, in any economic stimulus package that moves through Congress.

Investment in health IT adoption that effectively demonstrates improvements in the quality and efficiency of health care delivery will stimulate the economy and lay the foundation for the transformation of our health care system, improving quality and safety, saving lives, reducing health care costs, and increasing access.

Because of the highly fragmented nature of our system, clinicians often do not have the information they need for decision-making, nor do those responsible for improving the health of the American population. And most importantly, patients do not have ready access to the information they need to effectively manage their health care. An electronic health information infrastructure that is secure and protects privacy, will not only transform care delivery, but also enable us to more effectively measure and improve quality, better manage chronic conditions, monitor safety and public health threats, help us better understand which treatments work best for specific diseases and conditions, and enable consumers to more effectively navigate our health care system.

While there is considerable recognition of the benefits of health IT and health information exchange in addressing health care challenges, such efforts have been hampered by the costs associated with implementation, training, and effective use--including the transformation of work-flows necessary to achieve improvements in quality and efficiency. The economic stimulus package is an opportunity to begin building the infrastructure necessary to transform our health care system.

Federal funding through the economic stimulus package, which could take the form of grants, loans and financial incentives, can support provider adoption; technical assistance and workforce training programs to support the transformation of care delivery processes which draw upon electronic health information; planning and implementation of state and community efforts focused on improving health and health care through health information exchange; and necessary public-private sector leadership efforts on both standards for interoperability and policy.

Investments in a policy framework, including privacy policy that protects individual health information without unduly hindering the flow of information necessary for quality measurement and improvement, care coordination, patient safety, and improving health outcomes; as well as public-private sector efforts to identify, harmonize, agree upon and drive the adoption of a set of standards for interoperability, in a coordinated, inclusive, transparent fashion—building on the

considerable progress already made--will provide a strong foundation upon which health IT investments can occur.

We have an enormous opportunity in the weeks and months ahead to support improvements in the U.S. health care system. Congress' inclusion of support for health IT will not only stimulate the economy and create jobs, it will also lay the foundation for a higher quality, safer, more accessible, and more efficient health care system. The effective adoption of health IT and electronic health information exchange will transform care delivery, improve the health of the American population, and enable individuals to more effectively manage their health and health care.

Allscripts	Laboratory Corporation of America
American Cancer Society Action Network	Holdings
American College of Cardiology	McKesson Corporation
American College of Emergency Physicians	Medical Group Management Association
American College of Physicians	Mergetics, Inc.
American Health Quality Association	National Association of County and City Health Officials
American Heart Association	National Partnership for Women and Families
American Medical Association	National Quality Forum
American Medical Informatics Association	NextGen
Axolotl Corporation	New York eHealth Collaborative
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association	Partners HealthCare System
CareEntrust	Pfizer Inc.
Center for Democracy and Technology	Prematics, Inc.
CHRISTUS Health	PricewaterhouseCoopers' Health Care Information Technology Practice
CIGNA Corporation	SAFE-BioPharma
Cognosante	Siemens
CompTIA	SureScripts-RxHub
Davis Wright Tremaine	Thomson Reuters Healthcare
DocSite	URAC
Eye Controls, LLC	Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc.
GE Healthcare	VHA Inc.
Greater Flint Health Coalition	Wisconsin Health Information Exchange
HealthBridge	
HLTH Corporation and WebMD Health Corp.	
Indiana Health Information Exchange	

The eHealth Initiative (eHI) is an independent, non-profit multi-stakeholder organization whose mission is to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of healthcare through information and information technology. eHI engages multiple stakeholders including clinicians, consumer and patient groups, employers and healthcare purchasers, healthcare IT suppliers, health plans, hospitals and other providers, laboratories, pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers, pharmacies, public health agencies, and state and community-based organizations, to reach agreement on and drive the adoption of common principles, policies, strategies and actions that improve the quality, safety and efficiency of health care through information technology that are responsible, practical, sustainable, responsible to stakeholder needs—particularly those of patients--and build and maintain the public's trust.