

December 10, 2007

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Enzi:

We are writing to support your efforts to pass Health Information Technology legislation this year. Your leadership will help make the widespread deployment of Health IT a reality and will put us on the road to improved care, greater convenience, lower costs, and fewer deaths and injuries due to medical errors.

We support establishing a date certain for interoperability standards, providing grants and loans to providers, empowering public-private partnerships, and codifying aspects of the Health IT effort into law. We believe these actions will help to realize the life-saving and cost-saving advances of modern technology.

Health IT provides instant access to patient health records and other vital medical data. Today, health records are scattered among all the doctors, clinics, hospitals, pharmacies and labs that a patient has visited. That causes delays in gathering critical patient information when it is needed and creates unfortunate gaps in patients' medical histories.

Health IT will provide better access to care for underserved communities, eliminate duplicate and unnecessary testing, control costs, and significantly reduce the 100,000 deaths caused each year by medical errors.

With the upcoming election year, Congress has a narrow window of opportunity to act on this critical issue. Otherwise, Americans continue to be unnecessarily denied the benefits of Health IT.

Health IT enjoys broad bipartisan support in the Congress and has united a vast array of health care providers, businesses, labor unions, disease advocacy groups, medical associations and consumers. By acting now, Congress can achieve a powerful victory for all Americans.

We urge you to pass Health IT legislation this year.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing
American Benefits Council
The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
The American Diabetes Association
American Health Information Management Association
American Heart Association
American Homeowners Grassroots Alliance
American Medical Informatics Association
The Boeing Company
Business Roundtable
Consumers for Competitive Choice
Corporate Health Care Coalition
The Dow Chemical Company
Eastman Kodak Company
eHealth Initiative
Electronic Health Records Vendor Association (EHRVA)
The ERISA Industry Committee
FasterCures
Genetic Alliance
Greenway Medical Technologies, Inc.
Health IT Now! Coalition
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Healthcare Leadership Council
HR Policy Association
IBM
Information Technology Industry Council
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Latino Coalition
Marshfield Clinic
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Health Underwriters
National Association of Manufacturers
National Business Coalition on Health
National Business Group on Health
National Disease Clusters Alliance
National Medical Association
National MS Society
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Retail Federation
Oracle
Parkinson's Action Network
Research!America
RetireSafe

Seniors Coalition

Society for Human Resource Management

US Oncology

Verizon Communications

Women Work!

World Institute on Disability

Xerox Corporation