

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