

PRO(TECH)T Act Would Improve Exchange of Health Information & Safeguard Patient Privacy

Washington, D.C. — The Committee on Energy and Commerce today approved H.R. 6357, the “Protecting Records, Optimizing Treatment, and Easing Communication through Healthcare Technology Act of 2008” or the PRO(TECH)T Act, by voice vote. This bipartisan legislation is designed to strengthen the quality of health care, reduce medical errors and costs, and further protect the privacy and security of health information in the electronic age.

For Immediate Release: July 23, 2008

Contact: Jodi Seth or Brin Frazier 202-225-5735

PRO(TECH)T Act Would Improve Exchange of Health Information & Safeguard Patient Privacy

Washington, D.C.

— The Committee on Energy and Commerce today approved H.R. 6357, the “Protecting Records, Optimizing Treatment, and Easing Communication through Healthcare Technology Act of 2008” or the PRO(TECH)T Act, by voice vote. This bipartisan legislation is designed to strengthen the quality of health care, reduce medical errors and costs, and further protect the privacy and security of health information in the electronic age.

“Your grocery store can immediately determine what brand of cereal you bought last year, but your cardiologist cannot quickly find what prescriptions your family doctor wrote for you last week,” said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. “That is a problem for the cost and quality of healthcare. It is time to bring healthcare into the 21st century, and I’m proud of the strong, bipartisan legislation we’ve developed to move us forward. I especially want to thank Representatives Barton, Pallone and Deal for their leadership in crafting this bill, and I look forward to supporting its passage on the House floor.”

The legislation promotes the nationwide adoption of a Health Information Technology (HIT) infrastructure and establishes incentives for doctors, hospitals, insurers, and the government to exchange health information electronically across the country. Additionally, H.R. 6357 makes permanent the Office of the

National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and encourages the use of an electronic health record for each person in the United States by 2014. It provides \$560 million in grants and loans to providers, particularly small and rural providers and those serving medically underserved areas, to acquire electronic medical record systems.

"Today, we are one step closer to modernizing our nation's health care system," said Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health. "Investing in HIT today will help make our health care system more efficient tomorrow, thereby lowering costs and saving lives. I commend the bipartisan efforts that went into producing this legislation in the Committee, and am hopeful that we can get this bill to the House floor as soon as possible."

H.R.

6357 also strengthens the law protecting the security and privacy of an individual's health information through provisions such as requiring notification when personal health information is breached. The bill extends federal privacy law to entities that do business with providers, such as quality review organizations and newer entities that store and manage a provider's electronic health information allowing the Federal Government to bring enforcement actions against bad actors.

Amendments

offered by Reps. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Edward Markey(D-MA) and Mike Rogers (R-MI) were agreed to by voice vote and are available below.

The

Subcommittee on Health approved H.R. 6357 on June 25, 2008, by voice vote. H.R. 6357 builds on a discussion draft released by Reps. Dingell and Pallone, along with Reps. Joe Barton (R-TX), Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Nathan Deal (R-GA), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health, on May 22, 2008. On June 4, 2008, the Subcommittee held a hearing in which witnesses from the Administration and representatives from consumer, technological, and privacy groups provided feedback on the draft legislation.

Additional information on H.R. 6357 along with Chairman Dingell's full statement is available on the Committee's web site.

Read the adopted Amendments:

- Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (AINS) offered by Mr. Dingell »

- Amendment to the AINS offered by Mr. Rogers »
- Amendment to the AINS offered by Ms. Eshoo »
- Amendment to the AINS offered by Ms. Eshoo »
- Amendment to the AINS offered by Mr. Markey »

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515