

June 23, 2015

Congressman Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

The undersigned are writing today to voice our support for the interoperability provisions of H.R. 6, the *21st Century Cures Act*. We are a diverse coalition of health care providers, patient advocates, consumers, employers, and payers who support the adoption and use of health IT to improve health outcomes and to lower costs.

We believe technology will play a foundational role in fostering 21st century cures. Unfortunately, interoperable health systems remain more a dream than a reality despite tens of billions of dollars in federal and private investments over the past few years. While approximately 97 percent of eligible hospitals and 77 percent of eligible providers use certified EHRs, just 14 percent of providers share health information outside their organization. The sad reality is that current federal programs have not capitalized on the potential of interoperable health technologies or the application of data in advancing better treatments and cures. As a result, the tools Congress meant for improved quality, efficiency, and health outcomes have become burdens on providers and a drain on taxpayers.

We support Congress changing the law to address the known defects associated with interoperability, and we applaud the provisions included in H.R. 6 that will foster interoperability and leverage technology and data in improving our health system. Specifically, we support the following provisions:

- *Standards* – HITN supports industry-developed standards, distinct definition around common standards, open APIs, and thorough testing. Your bill largely addresses these issues and will help ensure no more taxpayer dollars are used to subsidize business practices that impede the free flow of information.
- *Process* – The current standards process produces bad outcomes, and should be reformed.
- *Enforcement* – The bill applies civil monetary penalties and decertification – program exclusion – for bad actors, including those who engage in information blocking. These same penalties are used for hospitals and physicians since Medicare's inception as a way to protect program integrity, taxpayers, and Medicare beneficiaries.

Your legislation is a major positive step in fixing the problems associated with a lack of interoperability. We appreciate your hard work on this bipartisan piece of legislation and look forward to working with you to ensure the promise of 21st Century Cures is realized for all Americans.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Association of Diabetes Educators
Apervita, Inc.
athenahealth
Brain Injury Association of America

Bread for the City
Health IT Now
Intel
LGBT Technology Partnership & Institute
McKesson
Mortara Instruments
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Health Underwriters
National Association of Manufacturers
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Retail Federation
Newborn Coalition
Newborn Foundation
Open Minds
Oracle
Patient Safety Movement Foundation
Pediatric Hydrocephalus Foundation
RetireSafe
Samsung Electronics America
The ALS Association
The Dow Chemical Company
Tourette Association of America
United Spinal Association
Verizon

cc: Congresswoman Diana DeGette
Congressman Michael Burgess