

The Honorable Dennis Hastert  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives

July 19, 2006

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Congress has made substantial progress in moving Health IT legislation this year. Both the Ways & Means and Energy & Commerce Committees have passed bills that would substantially improve the quality of health care in the United States while reducing costs. The need to improve our nation's health system is obvious. According to recent studies by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and industry groups:

- An estimated 45,000-98,000 people die every year from hospital medical errors (more than motor vehicle accidents or breast cancer).
- The U.S. spends over \$300 billion a year on inappropriate treatment and up to \$150 billion on administrative waste.
- In 2002, only 13% of hospitals and between 14 and 28% of doctors' offices reported using electronic health records.
- Health care organizations invest only 2.2% in IT, considerably lower than that of other industries and countries.

Based on partnerships with health care providers and government agencies around the country, industry has reached the following conclusions:

- Paper-based techniques for record-keeping are antiquated, inefficient and potentially hazardous to patient care.
- The key to quality health care is modernization through IT interoperability and the adoption of a standards-based electronic health records (EHR) system.
- This integrated system would streamline patient health records while protecting patient privacy.
- An EHR system can reduce inpatient hospitalizations leading to potential annual savings of over \$28 billion nationwide (Patient Safety Institute).

The passage of health information technology legislation is critical to moving us towards these benefits. With that in mind, we urge you to pass HR 4157 by the August break so that a Conference Report with the Senate can be completed and the Congress can pass meaningful health care reform this year.

Sincerely,

Allscripts  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Benefits Council

American College of Emergency Physicians  
American Health Care Association  
American Health Information Management Association  
American Medical Informatics Association  
Business Roundtable  
California Regional Health Information Organization  
Clinical Integration Networks of America, Inc.  
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)  
Computing Technology Industry Association / CompTIA  
Dell Inc.  
DrFirst  
Eastman Kodak Company  
EDS  
eHealth Initiative  
Emdeon Corporation  
ERISA Industry Committee  
Georgia Medical Care Foundation  
Healthcare Leadership Council  
Healthwise  
HIMSS  
HIMSS Electronic Health Record Vendors Association (EHRVA)  
HR Policy Association  
IBM  
Information Technology Industry Council  
Inland Northwest Health Services  
Intel Corporation  
Madison Patient Safety Collaborative  
Massachusetts Health Data Consortium  
Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative  
Medco Health Solutions  
National Association for the Support of Long Term Care  
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)  
National Business Coalition on Health  
National Business Group on Health  
National Committee for Quality Assurance  
NCR  
Oracle Corporation  
RxHub  
Siemens  
Sun Microsystems.  
SureScripts  
The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA)  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)/UPMC Health Plan American  
Academy of Pediatrics

cc:

The Honorable John Boehner  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives