

The Honorable Timothy F. Murphy  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy  
U.S. House of Representatives

May 11, 2005

Dear Mr. Murphy and Mr. Kennedy:

The undersigned organizations would like to congratulate you on the introduction of the "21<sup>st</sup> Century Health Information Act of 2005" and urge support for a number of important provisions contained in the Act.

First, the Act includes a number of funding incentive approaches intended to stimulate healthcare improvements enabled by information technology.

Most important, the Act would adjust Medicare payments to providers who participate in a health information network that improves the quality and accuracy of clinical decision-making. The importance of reforming Medicare is hard to overstate. With so many of the sickest Americans in this one program, creating a relationship between payment and quality in Medicare will have a lifesaving impact for patients throughout the country.

The Act also authorizes grants, loans, and permits Medicaid funding for the development and implementation of a regional health information networks. If funded through the subsequent appropriations and State processes, these various funding approaches would serve a different need from the Medicare funding. These funds would go directly to the governance, design, implementation, and support of the regional health information systems. These funds would allow for the laying of the "tracks" over which Medicare funded clinical decision-making will run.

The legislation would also reduce the communication barriers that make it difficult for physicians to treat patients. The Act provides that the Secretary shall adopt data standards for interoperability between providers, consumers, and federal agencies and links funding to the adoption of those standards. At the same time, the Act would include privacy and security protections to ensure that patients were protected from inappropriate disclosure of their health information.

Finally, the Act would create a safe harbor for equipment and services provided for the development of a health information network without violating the Medicare self-referral and anti-kickback provisions.

Again, we urge support of these important provisions for funding, standards, and a safe harbor and congratulate you on the introduction of the Act.

Sincerely,

National Association of Manufacturers  
American Health Information Management  
Association  
HR Policy Associates  
IBM  
eHealth Initiative  
Kryptiq Corporation  
Intel Corporation  
American College of Physicians  
Dell Corporation

National Alliance for Primary Care  
Informatics  
WebMD Corporation  
HIMSS  
Siemens Medical Solutions  
AllScripts Healthcare Solutions  
Greenway Medical Technologies  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
Cerner Corporation  
MediNotes Corporation