

October 26, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
Office of the Majority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
Office of the Minority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
Office of the Speaker
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
Office of the Minority Leader
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leaders Reid and Pelosi:

On behalf of the Premier healthcare alliance serving approximately 3,750 leading hospitals and health systems and 130,000 other sites of care, we urge you to act swiftly in the remaining days of the 114th Congress to include the health information technology (HIT) provisions in the 21st Century Cures/Innovations legislation in any final legislative package.

We are in strong support of the HIT interoperability provisions that will improve the ability of healthcare providers, patients and researchers to seamlessly and securely access health information across different electronic health record (EHR) systems. In particular, we support having criteria that HIT would have to meet to be considered “interoperable” and standards that set forth the categories for EHR vendors. Certification of EHRs should focus on the overall ability of EHR systems to retrieve and send data for patient care. This includes entity data-sharing programs that do not require vendor-specific interfaces and which are also tested in the real world. We have shared our detailed views with the committees of jurisdiction on HIT and ask that these and other important provisions be included in any final legislation.

A wealth of research and analysis speaks to how interoperability is driving up costs and interfering with care coordination and management. Most recently, a study by KLAS research found that just 6 percent of healthcare providers can effectively access information accessed from exchange partners on different electronic medical records. In fact, according to a study by Premier and eHealth Initiative (eHI), integrating data from out-of-network providers was the top HIT challenge for 80 percent of the ACOs. According to another Premier survey, just 38 percent of hospital executives feel their facilities are able to successfully access data from affiliated or non-employed physician networks.

Legislation to require greater HIT interoperability is essential to addressing these impediments to better connectivity between providers, smoother care transitions for patients and safer, more efficient

delivery of care. For example, the legislation will help facilitate access to data in EHRs that can go into registries, an issue of great concern to physician groups in particular. Patients deserve the highest quality of care from all providers, which only can be achieved when we are able to communicate and coordinate care together.

Premier agrees that this could be one of the most important pieces of legislation that Congress passes this year and we urge you to work together to advance these HIT interoperability provisions across the finish line before adjourning this year.

Sincerely,



Blair Childs
Senior vice president, Public Affairs
Premier healthcare alliance

cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Frank Pallone