



MITA[®]

**MEDICAL IMAGING
& TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE**

A DIVISION OF **NEMA**[®]

1300 North 17th Street • Suite 900
Arlington, Virginia 22209
Tel: 703.841.3200
Fax: 703.841.3392
www.medicalimaging.org

June 18, 2015

BY ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mark Warner
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Chronic Care Stakeholder Letter

Dear Chairman Hatch, Ranking Member Wyden, Senator Isakson, and Senator Warner:

As the leading trade association representing the manufacturers of medical imaging devices and radiopharmaceuticals, the Medical Imaging and Technology Alliance (MITA) would like to applaud you for your dedication to improving care for the millions of Americans who suffer from chronic medical conditions. We appreciate your request for stakeholder involvement in this endeavor and look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Medical imaging encompasses x-ray imaging, computed tomography (CT) scans, ultrasound, nuclear imaging (including positron emission tomography (PET)), and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Medical imaging is used to diagnose patients with a variety of medical conditions, often detecting morbidity earlier than would otherwise be possible, reducing the need for costly medical services and invasive surgical procedures, and improving patient outcomes. In addition, medical imaging equipment often is used to select, guide, and facilitate effective treatment, for example, by using image guidance for surgical or radiotherapeutic interventions.

With regard to chronic medical conditions, medical imaging plays a vital role in the diagnosis, staging, and surveillance of a great many diseases including cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, arthritis, and others. Early and accurate diagnosis of a chronic condition through medical imaging typically leads to lower costs, lower levels of therapeutic intervention, lower mortality, and in general contributes to higher quality of life. Monitoring of chronic conditions such as cancer and heart disease through medical imaging can help shape treatment strategies in real time, prevent occurrence of concurrent acute episodes, and reduce expensive hospitalizations.

(1) Innovative new applications of medical imaging technologies bring great promise for the future of chronic condition management.

New technologies such as low-dose CT for lung cancer screening promise a diagnosis at a stage where treatment is of a lower intensity and higher success rate. Thanks to ongoing developments in PET imaging, Alzheimer's disease may one day be understood such that its progress can be slowed and managed as a chronic condition. Advancements in MRI and ultrasound technology are continuously improving our understanding of the function of the human anatomy and, therefore, how best to treat chronic conditions such as arthritis.

(2) Not only are the applications of our technologies improving, but the technologies themselves are continuously adapting to the needs of patients and physicians.

CT image quality is constantly improving while radiation doses are simultaneously being optimized, usually at lower levels. For patients with chronic conditions such as Crohn's disease who require repeat imaging, this is a vital patient protection feature. The MITA Smart Dose standard bundles four key dose optimization features to ensure that compliant CT equipment produces high-quality diagnostic images while supporting patient well-being.

Ultrasound machines with their ever increasing portability continue to bring more care directly to the patient's bedside, reducing the time to diagnosis and decreasing the possibility of pneumothorax, laceration, or arterial puncture for patients that need frequent central line, port, or tap placement.

(3) Medical imaging promises to grow in importance as the health care delivery and payment paradigm shifts from volume to value.

We at MITA are constantly considering how our technologies fit into future health care delivery and payment models. In addition to your efforts, private payors, Medicare, and Medicaid are all exploring ways to improve chronic care delivery and payment. We applaud these efforts since they promise to lead to lower costs and better patient outcomes, particularly for those who are managing complicated or multiple chronic diseases.

Major reforms, even promising and worthwhile ones, always bring a certain degree of concern. With regard to medical imaging, we want to ensure that these critical diagnosis and monitoring technologies remain accessible to patients. Stinting on care is a potential unintended outcome from novel payment models—diagnostic imaging, in particular, is often discussed as shifting from a profit center to a cost center. We think that medical imaging is better described as a “value center”.

As the system shifts to value-based models of care, the importance of early and accurate diagnosis through medical imaging will only increase. Through early and accurate diagnosis with medical imaging, physicians in a reformed payment model will be able to efficiently provide necessary care to patients with chronic medical conditions.

We are currently researching the value that medical imaging brings to various episodes of care, particularly within the context of novel payment models, and look forward to sharing our findings with the Committee in the months ahead.

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MITA appreciates this opportunity to support the Committee's efforts to improve outcomes and lower costs for the millions of Americans with chronic medical conditions. We look forward to working with you and would be pleased to answer any questions you might have about these comments. Please contact Andy Dhokai at adhokai@medicalimaging.org or (703) 841-3237 if MITA can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Andy Dhokai
Director of Federal Relations, MITA