# HiMSS Electronic Health Record Association

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June 22, 2015

Chairman Orrin Hatch                          Ranking Member Ron Wyden
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building            221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510                        Washington, D.C. 20510


Senator Johnny Isakson                        Senator Mark Warner
131 Russell Senate Office Building            475 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510                        Washington, D.C. 20510


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

The Electronic Health Record Association (EHRA), representing nearly 40 companies that supply the vast majority of operational EHRs in the US, supports your formation of the Finance Committee working group to improve outcomes for Medicare patients requiring care for chronic illnesses. We believe strongly that EHRs and health IT in general can play an important role in enhancing the clinical care and management of patients with chronic illnesses by enabling care coordination within and across healthcare provider organizations, providing clinical decision support (CDS) based on evidence-based guidelines, and supporting quality measurement to evaluate progress in improving care.

Specifically, EHRs available today (and as certified by ONC) provide multiple core functions that enable management of individual patients and populations with chronic conditions. These features include CDS, which can be configured to enhance clinical care based on select patient attributes such as diagnoses, medications, and test results. For example, alerts can be created to ensure that a diabetic patient's physician knows that glucose levels are out of range based on data coming from remote monitoring devices integrated with the EHR. Patient lists can also be generated for clinicians to include patients with chronic conditions that meet additional criteria as determined by the organization. EHRs also support provision of patient education resources, secure messaging between providers and patients, and patient portals and similar patient engagement tools. Finally, EHRs support standards-based interoperability that enhances care coordination within and across healthcare organizations, including maintenance and sharing of care plans. These and other advanced EHR features support better, more efficient care for patients who require ongoing, well-coordinated care across settings.
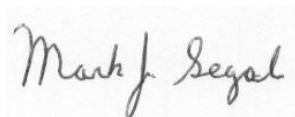
In addition, health IT that supports telehealth and remote monitoring can bring care providers and patients in rural areas together in real-time to support care interactions that might not otherwise be possible or practical.  Information from telehealth encounters also can be made available through interoperable EHRs to help clinicians coordinate care and manage the effective use of diagnostic services and medications.

We emphasize as well that EHRs and health IT are foundational to new payment models that strive to shift from fee-for-service models to value- and outcomes-based payment and delivery systems which are designed in part to enhance the care of individuals and populations with chronic illnesses.  The growth in EHR adoption and associated digitization, including new ecosystems of connected health IT that includes, but extends beyond, EHRs will continue to drive important innovations, including personalized medicine, population health management, data analytics, and advanced payment models.  Given the critical role that EHRs will play in enabling these capabilities, we urge Congress and the federal government to engage with EHR developers and the broader health IT community to help prepare for and ensure the best use of technology.

In sum, we believe there is a great opportunity to improve the quality and efficiency of care for chronically ill patients through the use of EHRs and other health IT.   As the new working group moves forward, we hope that you will call on EHRA to participate in a collaborative dialog on this important issue.
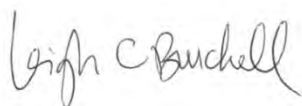
Sincerely,


Mark Segal, PhD
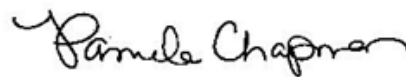Chair, EHR Association
GE Healthcare IT

Sarah Corley, MD
Vice Chair, EHR Association
NextGen Healthcare

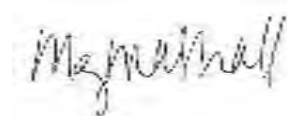**HIMSS EHR Association Executive Committee**


Leigh Burchell
Allscripts

Pamela Chapman
e-MDs


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Meg Marshall, JD
Cerner Corporation

Ginny Meadows, RN
McKesson Corporation

Sasha TerMaat
Epic

**About the EHR Association**

Established in 2004, the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Association is comprised of nearly 40 companies that supply the vast **majority of operational EHRs to physicians' practices and hospitals across the United States.** The EHR Association operates on the premise that the rapid, widespread adoption of EHRs will help improve the quality of patient care as well as the productivity and sustainability of the healthcare system as a key enabler of healthcare transformation. The EHR Association and its members are committed to supporting safe healthcare delivery, fostering continued innovation, and operating with high integrity in the market for our users and their patients and families.

The EHR Association is a partner of HIMSS. For more information, visit www.ehrassociation.org.

*More than Ten Years of Advocacy, Education & Outreach*
*2004 – 2015*

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