



**EHR Association Statement to the Press
National Health IT Week
September 10-14, 2012**

On behalf of the Electronic Health Record Association (EHR Association), I'd like to thank everyone for their support of these events and reinforce our commitment to the accelerated adoption of health IT as an essential, foundational element of any serious attempt to transform our nation's healthcare delivery system and lessen its impact on the Federal budget. Our member companies – some large, multi-national companies with other lines of business and some small companies entirely focused on health information technology – come together to speak with a single voice on these issues that affect not only our customers, but the healthcare delivery system as a whole. We represent healthcare organizations and providers – thousands of hospitals and tens of thousands of physicians who work in practices of all sizes and specialties – but we are also purchasers of healthcare for our employees and consumers of healthcare.

While our activities since the Association was established in 2004 have touched on many issues, our messages to Congress this week focus on three key points:

Our first "ask" is that, during this period of rapid technology adoption, Congress should continue its bipartisan leadership to encourage the system-wide expansion of health IT utilization, recognizing that such technology is foundational to the ability to accurately understand the quality and cost of care delivered.

Secondly, the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive program has succeeded in moving thousands of providers to meaningful use of EHRs and other health IT, but more work remains before we will achieve system-wide adoption of EHRs. These technologies serve a critical role in facilitating the transformation of the nation's healthcare system and enabling payers to reward quality and efficiency of care.

And lastly, with the passage of ARRA in 2009, Congress placed a high priority on the adoption of interoperable EHRs, including financial incentives for adopting and using EHRs in a meaningful way as well as disincentives for not doing so. The administration has made health information exchange an essential component of Stage 2 meaningful use, but conflicting state privacy and security laws are among the most serious impediments to HIE adoption. A lack of national guidelines for the interpretation of these laws is a persistent barrier to achieving these objectives, both locally and nationally, and must be addressed.

Our Association, comprised of 41 companies that supply the vast majority of operational EHRs to physicians' practices and hospitals across the United States, has dedicated thousands of volunteer hours to collaboration on key initiatives driving the health IT market today, particularly the 2009 HITECH Act and other efforts to initiate quality improvement and cost containment through innovative payment models. We will continue our collaboration and outreach to all industry stakeholders to continue the momentum toward achieving the objectives we all share – better, more accessible, affordable healthcare for all Americans.

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