

AHIC Successor Inaugural Board of Directors Meeting

Background: In order to facilitate the adoption of health information technology in a smooth market led way, HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt created the American Health Information Community (AHIC) in 2005. The AHIC was comprised of both public officials and leading private stakeholders, and was designed to make recommendations to Secretary Leavitt on how to speed up adoption of interoperable HIT in a market-driven way. The group was created as an interim organization, sunsetting into a new public private partnership now known as the AHIC Successor, INC. The AHIC Successor was incorporated on July, 17, 2008 and the AHIC Successor Board was announced on September 23, 2008. The AHIC Successor Board consists of a highly qualified and diverse team of healthcare leaders representing for-profit, not-for profit, and Federal Government interests.

AHIC Successor's Board of Directors held its inaugural meeting yesterday (November 13, 2008).

The following is a summary of the news items from Sec. Leavitt and Dr. Kolodner's introductions to AHIC Successor Inc., and Dr. John Tooker's summary of the AHIC Successor Inc.'s Board of Directors inaugural meeting.

Michael Leavitt, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Highlighted milestones, including the appointment of National Coordinator and Presidential Executive Order 13355 establishing a national priority for implementing EHR solutions for "most Americans."
- Highlighted that there are many different perspectives on what makes an HER and at least two schools of thought on the best role for the Federal government to determine - HHS decides standards, or private decides standards.
- Outlined his concerns that the downside of HHS running the standards and certification process would be bureaucratic crawl.
- Advocated for the private sector running the standards and certification process- "last vendor standing, largest market share wins."
- Offered the observation that The AHIC worked that convened HITSP and CCHIT, and established priorities for each needs to be continued by the AHIC Successor to provide a middle ground where the private sector mixed with government can create the best of both worlds.
- Called A2 the "most important organization in healthcare that nobody knows."
- Announced he will approve 60 more standards before he leaves in 67 days
- Reminded participants that 75% of the market has adopted CCHIT certification standards. The AHIC Successor will replace AHIC as setting priorities for CCHIT

and HITSP, and both organizations are prepared to seamlessly transition to the A2 process.

- Secretary Leavitt described the federal government representatives Ex officio role in A2
- If Secretary is involved in a committee, there are legal restrictions on the Secretary being on the board of a group that they may be involved in funding via grants. Ex-officio title has been suggested by the HHS legal team as the best way of not violating this rule while allowing the Federal government to have a role in A2.
- This gives A2 an avenue to Federal Power, especially CMS money as a driver
- Secretary Leavitt feels it is unnecessary for the Secretary to have voting powers, but a federal presence is enough to influence A2 and assist their work.

Dr. Robert Kolodner, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Highlighted the challenges and successes from his tenure as the National Coordinator, and recognizes the contributions of Dr. David Brailer.
- Warned the group against the A2 becoming a power struggle, which keeps the group from being able to buildup trust from the stakeholder community.
- Noted that AHIC and A2 efforts are not about technology. They are about the health and well being of the patient community.
- Looks forward to working with AHIC Successor, Inc. in an ex-officio role.

John Tooker commented that stakeholders wanted government involved as full as possible.

Outline of the Federal Role in the AHIC Successor Organization:

Secretary Leavitt attempted to address the concerns by many in industry that the AHIC should be continued as a public sector effort. His intent was to address the question: Why doesn't the Federal government just become the standards making process?

- Federal Rulemaking is a slow, egalitarian process, private is more nimble.
- In the Federal government, continuity is broken every 4 or 8 years with the change in presidential administration.
- It will be 6 months before the next Secretary will be able to engage new priorities. The process will undo momentum.
- To start again developing the standards and certification process again would delay substantially the current momentum within the market. The new Congress doesn't have the knowledge about how the current process works.
- Private/Public partnership keeps Congress from using standards as a political football (interest politics). Lobbyists solicit Congress to give advantages to their interests.

- The successes of AHIC, CCHIT, HITSP, and A2 must be told to Congressional Staff
- The Secretary can not legally ask A2 members to go to the Hill and advocate on behalf of the A2 process, but the A2 Board of Directors has members connected with organizations that can provide that education. A2 is 4 years ahead of anything that a new Congress or HHS secretary can do. The stakeholder community supports it (60,000 volunteer hours) and the market supports it (75% of market has adopted CCHIT standards)

John Tooker, Interim Chairperson of the AHIC Successor Board of Directors:

- If you missed Secretary Leavitt and Dr. Kolodner's introduction to AHIC Successor due to the technical difficulties, you can listen to it on the AHIC Successor website (www.ahicsuccessor.org).
- The draft bylaws of AHIC Successor Inc. (which HIMSS submitted comments on) were discussed at this first meeting.
- At the December 9th meeting, the nominations committee, led by Dr. John Glaser, will bring their suggestions for who should be appointed to the standing committees (executive, finance, audit, etc.)
- The January meeting will focus on the transfer of AHIC activities to the AHIC successor Inc., and set the organization's priorities for 2009
- Other tasks for the organization include developing a value case prioritization process, finding a permanent CEO, and developing public relations and marketing for the organization.
- The draft value case prioritization process has been posted on the AHIC Successor website and is open for public comments until November 24, 2008.
- AHIC Successor Inc. will continue to inform its members and the public of updates.

Conclusions:

HIMSS is engaged in the future and success of AHIC Successor Inc. C. Martin Harris, M.D., M.B.A., FHIMSS, has been selected to serve on the AHIC Successor Board of Directors. First meeting was held on November 13, 2008. HIMSS requested member input, and submitted comments on the draft bylaws of AHIC Successor Inc. on October 24, 2008.

(http://www.himss.org/advocacy/d/AHICSuccessorBylaws_HIMSScomments_FINAL_10242008.pdf). HIMSS is seeking member input on the AHIC Successor draft

Prioritization Process

(<http://www.ahicsuccessor.org/hhs/ahic.nsf/AHIC%20Successor%20Prioritization%20Process%20V8%201031.pdf>). Comments may be sent to advocacy@himss.org.

The deadline for comment submission to AHIC Successor is November 24, 2008.