



The Office of Advocacy and Public Policy  
4300 Wilson Blvd, Suite 250  
Arlington, VA 22203

Tel 703 562-8800  
Fax 703 562-8801

October 3, 2007

The Honorable Robert Byrd  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
U.S House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member  
U.S House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Byrd and Obey, Ranking Members Cochran and Lewis,

On behalf of our 20,000+ individual members and over 350 corporate members at the Healthcare Information and Management Society (HIMSS), we are writing to urge passage of Appropriations legislation that provides the President's request for \$169 million for Health IT in his FY08 budget request. These funds will allow the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Michael Leavitt, to lead the effort to achieve the President's goal of electronic health records for all Americans within 10 years and begin positive change in our healthcare system.

The House has passed an FY08 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill that provides \$61 million of the President's HIT request for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). We are concerned that without fully funding the President's request, the Secretary will be forced to delay or reduce in scope health information technology projects. Current projects are providing valuable information at the intersection of healthcare quality and IT including implementation insights, as well as driving standards for modern health information technology, devising certification procedures, developing electronic information architecture and testing privacy standards. The Senate Appropriations Committee has funded \$71 million for this request and the full Senate can still provide full funding.

Members of the House and Senate and both parties recognize that information technology deployment will reduce medical errors, establish a more efficient and effective health care system, and help to reduce ballooning health care costs. By empowering clinicians with support tools to treat patients based on real-time, accurate, and complete medical information, we will transform the way healthcare is delivered in this country. Achieving this goal will require a long-term leadership commitment from the public and private sectors over a period of several years. Funding the President's full request will help demonstrate Congress's leadership in taking the first few critical steps.

We strongly urge you to enact Appropriations legislation that fully funds the President's Budget request for healthcare information technology. We must advance the work of creating an interoperable healthcare system that improves the quality of care while controlling costs.

Sincerely,

H. Stephen Lieber, CAE  
President & CEO

cc: The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman, U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable James T. Walsh, Ranking Member, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies