



## Electronic Health Record Association Underscores Its Support for Federal Government Focus on Interoperability

**CHICAGO (December 19, 2014)** – The EHR Association (EHRA) today reiterated its position that the federal government’s heightened focus on interoperability is appropriate, and that more measurement and evaluation in this critical area can ensure forward movement in the industry. The Association has been and continues to be supportive of government efforts to fully understand and address challenges associated with data exchange. The members of the Association, in serving the health information technology needs of the vast majority of hospitals and medical practices in the country, already facilitate hundreds of thousands of information exchange transactions every month, and that number is rapidly increasing.

EHRA provided a statement on December 17 in response to media inquiries on the specific de-certification provisions in report language accompanying the just-enacted FY 2015 federal spending bill. “That statement reflects the concern that an approach focused on decertification may not best address the varied and complex reasons that information flow can be encouraged, including those related to technology and standards, provider policies, legislative and regulatory limitations, and a payment system that does not yet appropriately incentivize concentrated efforts for data exchange,” said Mark Segal, PhD, EHRA Chair and Vice President, Government and Industry Affairs, GE Healthcare IT. “We are eager to engage in comprehensive discussions involving members of the Association, as well as our clients, intended to address the root causes of these challenges. Moreover, given the importance of data exchange, we support the broader study on interoperability called for by the spending bill report, and have consistently suggested that the next stage of the EHR Incentive Program focus on interoperability.”

“Our members are engaged in numerous real-world, multi-party health information exchange initiatives, including innovative approaches to technology and standards, intended to rapidly advance interoperability,” Segal went on to say. “We are pleased to continue to participate in ONC efforts to understand how to accelerate that even further,” he concluded.

The full EHRA statement regarding the data exchange and interoperability provisions of the report language accompanying the FY 2015 federal spending bill was as follows:

*We appreciate and agree with the strong congressional focus on interoperability, and think that the called-for Health IT Policy Committee study on barriers to interoperability is timely and aligned with the ONC interoperability roadmap. The EHR Association supports interoperability efforts and has key provisions regarding interoperability in the EHR Developer Code of Conduct we developed and released in 2013 (<http://ehra.org/ASP/codeofconduct.asp>). As such, our members are focused on*



*meeting the interoperability needs of their customers, and we believe that any inquiry by ONC will confirm this assessment. We do not believe that the concept of decertifying products that met and continue to meet federal interoperability certification criteria, which align with meaningful use requirements, would be an effective solution to the challenges faced by providers tasked with exchanging data. In fact, we believe it would introduce costly uncertainty into the industry and would prevent clients using such products from attesting for meaningful use or employing them in other important delivery reform initiatives. (Attributed to Mark Segal, PhD, EHRA Chair and Vice President, Government and Industry Affairs, GE Healthcare IT)*

**About the EHR Association**

Established in 2004, the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Association is comprised of more than 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 the HIMSS.

For more information, visit <http://www.EHRA.org>.

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