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HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association Supports Achievable
"Meaningful Use" Criteria in Comments to ONC

CHICAGO (July 13, 2009) - The Electronic Health Records Association (EHR Association) has made specific recommendations to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) on measurable criteria for achieving "meaningful use" of electronic health records (EHRs), as called for in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The Association specifically called for 2011 objectives to be based on software and standards that are currently deployed and implemented, with a focus on adoption and use of comprehensive EHRs and recognition of the need for differences between inpatient and ambulatory meaningful use criteria.

"Acquiring EHR technology does not automatically or quickly achieve "meaningful use" and its intended benefits," said Justin Barnes (Greenway Medical), EHR Association Chairman. "As vendors, we understand all too well the complex process of analyzing workflow, configuring systems to meet the needs of each environment and training clinicians. We encourage ONC to allow adequate time for this process so that the taxpayers receive value for their investment in HIT - more efficient and effective care delivery."

Other recommendations focus on computerized provider order entry (CPOE), tying it to electronic medication administration records (eMAR) and targeted order sets for specific chronic diseases. "We know that CPOE is not likely to be successfully implemented if physicians don't have all the related information they need to make good medical decisions," said Mark Segal, PhD (GE Healthcare), EHR Association Vice Chairman. "We believe that 2011 "meaningful use" criteria should reflect an incremental, rational approach to achieving full CPOE over time."

"Quality reporting is another area that requires consideration," Barnes went on to say. "Much good work has been done by CMS and NCQA on quality measures and reporting, and we should build on that, with "meaningful use" focusing on data collection in the EHR and reporting of quality measures based on resulting EHR data, rather than data from administrative or billing systems. In addition, starting in 2011, there should also be measures to evaluate the use of quality measures for patient care management.

"The Association also took the opportunity to reinforce its long-standing position that reporting and interoperability must be standards-based, using the Health Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP) work that has been ongoing since 2005. HITSP operates under the auspices of ONC.

The HIMSS EHR Association, chartered in 2004, provides leadership for the electronic health record community and their customers in the harmonization of HIT standards, the EHR certification process, standards-based healthcare interoperability, and performance and quality measures. The Association and its member companies have participated in all of these initiatives over the years, contributing extensive experience in the development and deployment of EHRs. EHR Association executives speak with a unified voice to represent member companies and their customers, and have supported codification of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) and a multi-stakeholder approach to standards and certification.

About HIMSS EHR Association

The HIMSS EHR Association is a trade association of electronic health record (EHR) companies that join together to lead the health IT industry in the accelerated adoption of electronic health records in hospital and ambulatory care settings in the US. The Association provides a leadership forum for the EHR software provider community to speak with a unified voice relative to standards development, the EHR certification process, interoperability, performance and quality measures, and other EHR issues as they become subject to increasing government, insurance and provider-driven initiatives and requests. Membership is open to HIMSS Corporate Members companies that design, develop and market their own EHRs. The Association is a partner of the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) and operates as an independent organizational unit within HIMSS. For more information, visit <http://www.himssEHRA.org>.

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