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**HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association Announces New
Collaboration and Responds to Stage 2 Meaningful Use Proposals at
HIMSS11**

CHICAGO (March 2, 2010) -- The HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association (EHR Association), in the midst of its annual all-member meeting and dozens of stakeholder meetings at HIMSS11 in Orlando, FL last week, announced the newly formed EHR Vendor Communications Workgroup, the result of a collaboration agreement between the EHR Association and the Regional Extension Center (REC) Vendor Selection and Management Community of Practice (VSM CoP). The group also submitted its responses to the Health IT Policy Committee's (HITPC) initial proposals for Stage 2 meaningful use criteria.

"It was a busy and productive week for the EHR Association," said Carl Dvorak of Epic and Association Chairman. "Our work with the REC VSM Community of Practice on the new communications initiative will help us coordinate our efforts to the ultimate benefit of our customers."

The overarching goal of the new workgroup is to ensure that adoption and use of health HIT selected by the providers results in improved efficiencies, usability, healthcare quality, clinical decision support, and better outcomes. The new workgroup, made up of an equal number of representatives from the REC VSM CoP and the EHR Association, will work toward the development of best practices for communications, system evaluation, implementation, and support.

Charlie Jarvis of NextGen and Association Vice Chair added, "This collaboration will lay the groundwork for more consistent, efficient processes across EHR Association member companies, the RECs, and even other HIT companies who, we hope, will support our collective efforts on behalf of providers to better manage this complex effort."

The Association also submitted its comments to the HIT Policy Committee (HITPC) on its preliminary Stage 2 meaningful use proposals. Particular emphasis was made on ensuring that the regulatory schedule allows for sufficient time for software developers and providers to safely develop,

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implement, and train users on a new software release. The Association is encouraging the HITPC to focus on lessons learned from Stage 1, increasing Stage 1 percentages vs. adding new criteria, and limiting new quality criteria to those specialties that were not included in Stage 1.

“We had more companies supporting this work than on any earlier public comment effort,” said Jarvis. “We clearly recognize the critical importance of getting this right – not only for software developers but, more importantly, for the thousands of provider organizations that are working to achieve meaningful use.”

In preparing this collaborative response, the Association relied on its workgroup structure, which ensures that representation from both enterprise-focused companies and ambulatory-only EHR suppliers, is balanced. Charlene Underwood of Siemens, a former EHR Association Chair and Chair of the Association’s workgroup that led their response effort, said, “This is a process that we’ve used in the past to engage as many member companies and, through them, their customers who reviewed our comments and provided feedback. We hope that the Policy Committee will consider our suggestions in this broader context as we work together to establish achievable objectives and measures that truly encourage adoption and use of interoperable EHRs.” Ms. Underwood serves on the HITPC meaningful use workgroup, representing EHR software developers.

Dvorak added, “While we have shared our concerns as software developers and on behalf of our customers who gave us input as EHR users, we are very encouraged by announcements which were made after several meetings with ONC representatives during HIMSS that they are considering how to correct the timing issue. We believe that a successful Stage 2 will focus on building on Stage 1 capabilities and lessons learned, and recommend that we all concentrate on those key initiatives that can be implemented broadly and deliver the most benefit for taxpayers’ investment in health IT.”

The EHR Association’s detailed comments on Stage 2 meaningful use proposals, as well as its cover letter summarizing these recommendations, is available at www.himssehra.org.

About the HIMSS EHR Association

The HIMSS EHR Association is a trade association of 46 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

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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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