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HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association Executives Testify at NCVHS Hearings on "Meaningful Use" Criteria

CHICAGO (April 28, 2009) – Executives from the Electronic Health Records Association (EHR Association) testified at this week's National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) hearings to help define and clarify "meaningful use", a term used in the HITECH Act (part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, ARRA). These EHR Association leaders were among an array of key stakeholders invited to offer expertise on how health information technology (HIT), specifically electronic health records (EHRs), can improve the quality, efficiency and safety of healthcare delivery in the US.

"We anticipate ARRA to result in widespread adoption and use of comprehensive EHRs that support interoperability, decision support, quality reporting and clinical research," said Justin Barnes, EHR Association Chairman and Vice President of *Greenway Medical Technologies*. "If we continue to work together in public and private collaboration, and build on the successes of CCHIT, HITSP and NQF, along with prudence and fiscal responsibility, we will achieve our goals of healthcare transformation and the estimated \$100-\$200 billion of annual savings that will come with a fully-integrated and interoperable healthcare system."

Barnes' testimony, like that of Mark Segal, Ph.D., member of the EHR Association Government Relations Workgroup and Director of Government and Industry Relations for GE Healthcare IT, has its foundations in the Association's recently published recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) on "meaningful use", developed collaboratively among all EHR Association member companies.

"HITECH will transform our industry and the health care system," said Segal, "We expect a substantial increase in hospital and professional adoption of comprehensive EHRs, with most of the impact occurring over the next five years. We also expect changes in the structure of our industry and in how its products are developed, priced, and deployed."

The EHR Association represents 40 member companies who are the major suppliers of electronic health record systems in the United States. EHR Association members have worked closely with physician practices and hospitals to successfully deploy thousands of EHRs, helping to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare delivery.

"As businesses, and as an Association, we are laser focused on helping our customers qualify as meaningful users," Segal went on to say. "Even before ARRA, the Association published its interoperability roadmap and supported the development of practical, meaningful CCHIT

certification criteria. We understand the dedication required to implement EHRs and want to make sure that "meaningful use" criteria are achievable while moving healthcare forward, especially in such critical areas as interoperability and health information exchange."

"We have worked closely with Congress and the Administration to support HIT and EHR adoption incentives and are pleased to be given this opportunity to provide our expertise in developing and deploying EHRs at the point-of-care. We stand ready to further assist HHS, NCVHS and others to further develop and refine the definitions and implementation of 'meaningful use,'" concluded Barnes.

About HIMSS EHR Association

The HIMSS EHR Association, now in its fifth year, provides leadership for the electronic health record community in the harmonization of HIT standards, the EHR certification process, standards-based healthcare interoperability, and performance and quality performance reporting. Speaking with a unified voice to represent its membership and their customers, EHR Association executives have supported codification of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) and an approach to standards development that builds on the framework created by the National eHealth Collaborative, the Health IT Standards Panel (HITSP) and the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology IT (CCHIT). 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 organizational unit within HIMSS. For more information, visit <http://www.himssEHRA.org>.

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