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November 8, 2019

The Honorable Brian Schatz
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Benjamin Cardin
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Schatz, Thune, Warner, Wicker, Cardin and Hyde-Smith,

On behalf of the members of the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Association, we are pleased to offer our support for the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act of 2019.

The EHR Association’s 33 member companies serve the vast majority of hospitals, post-acute, specialty-specific, and ambulatory healthcare providers using EHRs across the United States. Our core objectives focus on collaborative efforts to accelerate health information and technology adoption, advance information exchange between interoperable systems, and improve the quality and efficiency of care through the use of these important technologies.

The CONNECT for Health Act is an important bipartisan, bicameral bill that will modernize healthcare delivery for Medicare beneficiaries by removing barriers to the use of telehealth and other healthcare technologies, resulting in greater access to high-quality care, improved continuity of care, and better value for patients and the Medicare program.

Not only leveraged by small or rural care settings, the use of telehealth technology is becoming more widespread, offering significant benefits to patients through improved accessibility and cost savings.

Telehealth has been shown to promote a more equitable access to care, reduced absenteeism, and lowered overutilization of emergency care.

Unfortunately, existing regulations have restricted the use of telehealth services for many Medicare patients, limiting the categories of healthcare providers who can use telehealth services, the number of patients who can benefit from telehealth services, and the types of innovative technologies that can be utilized. The CONNECT for Health Act removes onerous restrictions on the use of telehealth and remote patient monitoring, thus expanding medical coverage in professional shortage areas, as well as for patients challenged to visit a doctor's office for a variety of reasons, whether in rural or urban environments.

The legislation additionally expands the use of telehealth for behavioral health services and allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to waive restrictions on telehealth services during emergencies. Health information and technology such as telehealth has showed great value, and we strongly support Congress' efforts to ensure that Americans have access to the care they need, when they need it and where they need it.

The CONNECT for Health Act of 2019 will help ensure Medicare beneficiaries receive access to high-quality and cost-effective telehealth services, and we thank you for your leadership on this and other important healthcare issues. We encourage Congress to support this legislation as an important step toward taking full advantage of telehealth. Telehealth has been proven to optimize access to care lessen patient wait times and travel times, reduce absenteeism of patients taking time off work for doctor appointments, or over-utilizing emergency care as the only option available during non-work hours.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff. Please contact Sarah Willis-Garcia, EHRA Program Manager, at swillis@ehra.org or 312.915.9518 with questions or for more information.

Sincerely,



Cherie Holmes-Henry
Chair, EHR Association
NextGen Healthcare



Hans J. Buitendijk
Vice Chair, EHR Association
Cerner Corporation

HIMSS EHR Association Executive Committee



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Foothold Technology



Barbara Hobbs
MEDITECH, Inc.



Rick Reeves, RPh
CPSI



Emily Richmond, MPH
Practice Fusion Inc., a subsidiary of Allscripts



Sasha TerMaat
Epic



Courtney E. Tesvich, RN
Nextech

About the HIMSS EHR Association

Established in 2004, the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Association is comprised of more than 30 companies that supply the vast majority of 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 HIMSS. For more information, visit www.ehra.org.