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Electronic Health Record Association Supports ONC's Initiative to Engage Consumers in their Health via Health IT

CHICAGO (September 15, 2011) -- The HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association (EHR Association), a collaboration of 42 EHR supplier companies, announced its support this week of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) event, kicking off an important federal initiative to educate and engage consumers in managing their health using health IT, "Putting the 'I' in 'IT'".

"Working with our customers to support patient outreach programs, EHR suppliers have been innovators in direct consumer engagement via health IT. Patient and consumer empowerment through education will go a long way in making the consumer a partner *in*, not just a recipient *of*, their health care," said Charles (Charlie) Jarvis, Vice President of Healthcare Services and Government Relations for NextGen Healthcare Information Systems and the Vice Chairman of the EHR Association. "And based on the evidence we've seen that these programs are effective – improved outcomes for diabetics who can better manage their disease based on trends in their blood sugar levels, early detection of preventable and treatable diseases, and improved compliance in self-management of chronic conditions – we, of course, want to be part of the ONC program." Jarvis concluded.

Joining consumer groups in supporting the program, including AARP, the Consumers' Union, and National eHealth Collaborative, the Association is among many technology suppliers who have pledged to take specific actions to encourage consumer participation in healthcare delivery through the development of appropriate tools that meet the needs of patients and their families. Provider organizations, professional societies, and payers are also at the table in support of the ONC Consumer Health Initiative which was announced at an event in Washington, DC on September 12.

"Our work to engage consumers through technology has made an important difference in both patient experience and clinical outcomes," said Carl Dvorak, Executive Vice President of Epic Systems, and Association Chairman. "We are pleased that HHS Secretary Sebelius has recognized the value that engaged consumers can make in helping dramatically improve the value of

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healthcare delivery for the entire country. We pledge to continue our innovative work in this field, and look forward to helping educate the public through shared success stories from those who have blazed new trails in this important area," Dvorak added

All the participating organizations in Monday's event committed to participate in future meetings to monitor the progress toward ONC's objectives to extend health IT beyond provider environments into consumers' homes, actively engage those consumers in their care delivery through education and information, and ensure that the federal government investment in health IT delivers value to all Americans.

About the HIMSS EHR Association

The EHR Association is a trade association of 42 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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