



Congressman Melancon
404 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-1803
October 3, 2007

Dear Congressman Melancon:

The members of the Health IT Now! coalition urge you to improve America's health care system by passing legislation this year to help deliver Health IT.

Immediate legislative action is required to clear the way for health care providers to use interoperable computer technology. Health IT will improve quality of care, save lives by significantly reducing the 98,000 deaths caused each year by medical errors, eliminate most duplicate and unnecessary testing, dramatically lower health care costs, and improve health care access for all Americans.

Health IT relies in large part on the same technology that banks use in ATMs and that business and industry use to manage information. It is time to put that technology to use in improving medical care and saving lives.

Our members are working diligently to inform the public, opinion makers and elected officials about Health IT. In September, we hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill for congressional staff featuring coalition members from the National Medical Association, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Retail Federation and patient advocate, Jennifer Queen. We are also organizing press events and policy conferences, all to help secure passage of Health IT legislation in 2007.

To expedite deployment of Health IT we urge you to pass legislation that will:

- Establish in statute federal responsibility to lead a public-private process to create standards for system interoperability, product certification, and quality measures and an accelerated process for standards improvement;
- Offer financial incentives to practitioners of care to encourage the adoption of Health IT, and offer states, communities and other entities incentives to plan Health IT components and develop Health Information Exchanges;
- Provide federal focus on consumer empowerment through patient education about electronic health records and information on quality of providers; and

- Establish federal leadership to resolve critical policy issues such as privacy and security as this life-saving system is being deployed.

With action on this issue underway in the Senate, we urge House members to pass a bill this year so that our health care system will finally deliver benefits that are long overdue.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing
American Homeowners Grassroots Alliance
American Society of Clinical Oncology
The Boeing Company
Consumers for Competitive Choice
FasterCures
Genetic Alliance
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Latino Coalition
Marshfield Clinic
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of Manufacturers
National Disease Clusters Alliance
National Medical Association
National MS Society
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Retail Federation
Parkinson's Action Network
Research!America
RetireSafe
Seniors Coalition
US Oncology
Verizon
Women Work!
World Institute on Disability

HealthITNow.org is an organization which educates the public and policymakers on the challenges of our current health care system and the transforming life-saving and cost-saving benefits of health care information technology. As an organization formed within the meaning of section 501(c)(4), contributions to the organization are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes.