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## **Health IT Now! Coalition Tells Congress Health IT Is Historic Solution To Remedy Health Care Disparities**

*Testimony argues Health IT removes opportunities for discrimination, improves access and follow-up care, and raises treatment priority for underserved Americans*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – In Congressional testimony submitted today, Health IT Now! Coalition Executive Director Joel White urged Congress to pass legislation this year to promote the deployment and adoption of health IT. "Our Coalition believes the federal government can and will work in harmony with the states and the private sector to deploy Health IT," said Mr. White, "to promote better access to and coordination of care in underserved communities."

Mr. White's testimony was submitted as part of a hearing held by the Subcommittee on Management, Organization and Procurement of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The hearing was titled, "Too Many Cooks? Coordinating Federal and State Health IT."

"Health IT is helping us reach patients in isolated, rural communities. The entire country should receive those benefits: better care, greater access with patient empowerment and convenience, and a healthier life," said Douglas Reding MD, MPH, Vice President of Wisconsin's Marshfield Clinics, a member of Health IT Now!. Mr. White's testimony cited efforts at the medical centers.

The hearing addressed system coordination and whether the nation's minority and rural communities would benefit from health IT. "Most minority providers operate in small or solo practices and cannot afford the start up cost of health IT, but would benefit from the long-term value of digitizing their processes," said Dr. Winston Price, past president of the National Medical Association. The NMA, a Health IT Now! member, is an organization that promotes medical progress for people of African descent. "There must be a national commitment to help these providers, financially and technically," said Dr. Winston.

Mr. White described benefits of health IT for underserved Americans, including "removing opportunities for racial discrimination," "raising the priority for vital treatment among underserved communities," "providing greater access to care," and "making possible better measurement of the disparity" itself.

The Health IT Now! Coalition is urging Congress to pass legislation this year that includes: establishment of a public-private process to set health IT standards; incentives to accelerate

adoption of health IT; consumer empowerment through patient education tools; and creation of a federal-state process to address security issues as health IT is deployed.

“Health IT is arguably the most effective initiative Congress can undertake to improve the quality of care for minority and rural Americans,” said Mr. White.

Mr. White's full testimony can be found on the Coalition website: [www.healthitnow.org](http://www.healthitnow.org).

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*Visit [www.healthITnow.org](http://www.healthITnow.org) to learn more about the coalition, its principles and its membership.*

*Members include:*

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The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
The American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
American Homeowners Grassroots Alliance  
The Boeing Company  
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Latino Coalition  
Marshfield Clinic  
National Alliance for Caregiving  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association of Health Underwriters  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Disease Clusters Alliance  
National Medical Association  
National MS Society  
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