



For Immediate Release
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Health IT Now! Coalition Meets with Members of Congress, Urges Passage of Health IT Legislation

*Coalition member Business Roundtable holds press event
with Senators Kennedy and Enzi to promote legislation*

WASHINGTON – Over twenty member organizations of the Health IT Now! Coalition held a full day of meetings with key House and Senate leaders today, urging them to quickly pass health information technology (health IT) legislation. The meetings culminated in a press event where Senate and business leaders joined together, calling upon Members of Congress to act on a health IT bill during the current session.

"It's time for Congress to pass a health IT bill," said former Representative Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and chairman of the Health IT Now! Coalition. "If we are to gain any benefits and maximize the impact of any type of health care reform, we must have in place essential tools for implementing new ideas. We need robust information systems so that we know who benefits and how. Our coalition's activities today underscore the urgent need for Congressional leadership on this important issue."

The press event was hosted by coalition member, Business Roundtable, and featured Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Ivan Seidenberg, Chairman and CEO of Verizon Communications and chairman of the Business Roundtable Health and Retirement Task Force, and Ronald A. Williams, Chairman and CEO of Aetna Inc.

Health IT brings network and computing technology commonly used in business to the field of health care. Federal legislation is required to establish a foundation for a nationwide electronic information system supporting patients and health care professionals. Health IT would create more convenient communication and faster, more secure access to medical histories, test results and other critical information. The result will be more effective, better care.

"The benefits of health IT are very simple: better patient care, better quality of life, saved dollars and saved lives," said Johnson. "It's not often that a health care issue enjoys broad, bipartisan support – health IT clearly does. But with every week that goes by,

passing legislation this session becomes more difficult due to the congressional calendar and election year activities. It's important the Congress move legislation right away."

The Health IT Now! Coalition urges Congress 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 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; and
- Establish federal leadership to resolve critical policy issues such as privacy and security as this life-saving system is being deployed.

Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate that meets these principles.

Health IT Now! unites patients, practitioners and employers, working together to take the steps to adopt Health IT now to dramatically improve quality of patient care, consumer convenience and patient health while lowering health care costs.

Visit www.healthITnow.org to learn more about the coalition, its principles and its membership. Members include:

Aetna

American Academy of Nursing

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

The American Diabetes Association

American Health Care Association

American Heart Association

American Homeowners Grassroots Alliance

American Telemedicine Association

The Boeing Company

Bronx Regional Health Information Organization

Business Roundtable

Consumers for Competitive Choice

The Dow Chemical Company

FasterCures

Genetic Alliance

Health Tech Strategies

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Latino Coalition

Marshfield Clinic

Mercy Medical Center

Montefiore Medical Center

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
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Retail Federation
New York Presbyterian Hospital
Nortel
Parkinson's Action Network
Pharmaceutical Care Management Association
Research!America
RetireSafe
Seniors Coalition
Society for Human Resource Management
US Chamber of Commerce
US Oncology
Verizon
WebMD Health Corp
Whitman-Walker Clinic
Women Work!
World Institute on Disability

HealthITNow.org is an organization that 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.

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