

**THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

RESOLUTION ON HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Resolution Summary

Health information technology (HIT), or development, installation, and implementation of computer systems and applications in the health care field, has become a priority issue for many state and national elected leaders. Improving HIT has become a major effort of public and private sector organizations seeking to improve health care quality, safety and efficiency. The federal government, Congress, numerous states, and private sector leaders at the national, state and regional level have developed a number of policies and strategies that will improve the technology available to those in the health care field. Strong evidence has shown that health information technology will play a crucial role in improving health care in the United States.

Despite the advantages, concerns surrounding issues such as patient privacy, expense and proven benefits of upgrading current practices has slowed the adoption of some technological advancement such as electronic medical records and other methods of tracking patient's health care needs and obtaining the latest information on how to treat illness. Although collaboration and information sharing have not always been part of the health care industry culture in the United States, complete adoption of health information technology across sectors will ultimately benefit patients. Such concerns must be addressed as states move forward to improve health care.

Internet addresses for additional information about Health Information Technology

Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology - www.hhs.gov/healthit/ and www.katrinahealth.org

CSG Health Information Technology resources for states - www.csg.org/CSG/Policy/health/health+teleconferences/Health+Information+Technology.htm

American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) - www.ahima.org

National Alliance for Health Information Technology (NAHIT) - www.nahit.org/alliance2/index.do

Health Information Technology Directives

- Management Directive #1: Support state efforts to improve health information technology in a coordinated and cost-effective manner.
- Management Directive #2: CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's web site and make available through regular communication venues.

- Management Directive #3: CSG supports improving health information technology because it has the potential to reduce health care costs, and improve quality of care and patient safety.

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- WHEREAS,** poor health care quality costs the United States more than \$1 billion per year in avoidable hospital costs and more than \$11.5 billion in lost workdays;
- WHEREAS,** the Institute of Medicine estimates that between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans die each year from medical errors.
- WHEREAS,** approximately 770,000 people are injured due to adverse drug events each year—up to 70 percent are avoidable according to the Institute of Medicine and the Markle Foundation.
- WHEREAS,** most medical orders and prescriptions are handwritten and can be misunderstood or not followed according to physician's instructions.
- WHEREAS,** it is estimated that HIT can reduce healthcare costs up to 20% per year – by saving time and reducing duplication and waste.
- WHEREAS,** most industries were spending about \$8,000 per worker for IT at the end of the 1990's, but the health care industry was investing only about \$1,000 per worker, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- WHEREAS,** a patient's vital medical information is often dispersed to many different health care providers in many different locations and doctors are sometimes left with no choice but to provide treatment without access to critical information, such as allergies, current medicines and prior diagnoses.
- WHEREAS,** the typical physician receives test results from 5 or more locations, according to the Commonwealth Fund.
- WHEREAS,** according to a Commonwealth Fund release in January of 2004, physicians have difficulty finding information previously recorded in a paper chart 30 percent of the time. Up to 20 percent of tests and exams are ordered due to retrieval barriers.
- WHEREAS,** a recent study by the Commonwealth Fund reported that physicians were not aware of 1 in 4 prescriptions that a patient had been given.
- WHEREAS,** moving medical records from one health care provider to another currently requires time consuming efforts such as phone calls, authorizations, referrals, copying, faxing and mailing documents.

WHEREAS, a report by the Commonwealth Fund showed that \$12 - \$28 of physician office visit charges cover tracking down and obtaining information.

WHEREAS, health information technology could provide up-to-date information to physicians to select the best treatments for their patients, reducing the lag time before new scientific advances are used in patient care.

WHEREAS, a study by the Commonwealth Fund revealed only about a quarter (27%) of doctors reported using an Electronic Medical Record routinely or occasionally.

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments believes that improving health information technology has the potential to reduce and improve health care costs, patient safety and quality. CSG encourages state legislators and other elected leaders to support and promote statewide and national efforts to develop health information technology.

Adopted this 4th day of December, 2005, at the
CSG Annual Committee and Task Force Meeting
in Wilmington, Delaware



Governor Ruth Ann Minner
2005 CSG President

Assemblyman Lynn Hettrick
2005 CSG Chair