

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2803**

June 6, 2017

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rose DeLauro  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I write to respectfully request that you maintain the FY2017 funding level for the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).

ONC's mission is to coordinate nationwide efforts to implement and use advanced health IT and to provide governance and structure for the exchange of electronic health information. Created by President Bush in a 2004 Executive Order and formally authorized by Congress in 2009, ONC, per its FY2017 budget estimate justification, has helped coordinate "federal policies and activities necessary to develop a robust and interoperable learning health system that assures that data can be securely captured, shared with, and used by the right people at the right time to achieve better care, smarter spending, and healthy people." Over the past few years, ONC has promoted better opioid prescribing practices, developed new health IT certification criteria to support and safely facilitate the accessibility and exchange of electronic health information, consulted for the White House's Open Data Initiative, conducted nationwide surveys regarding consumer and patient preferences regarding health IT privacy and security, produced guidance for small and medium-sized healthcare providers on the privacy and security of electronic health information, worked in conjunction with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on cybersecurity initiatives, and made countless other contributions in the health IT field.

Unfortunately, the President's FY2018 Budget Request proposes reducing funding for ONC by nearly forty percent. The Administration has tried to justify its decision based on the specious notion that because many physicians and hospitals have begun to adopt health IT, ONC's role as envisioned by Congress just eight years ago is now moot. On the contrary, wider adoption of health information systems and the proliferation of electronic medical records necessitates more policy guidance and support for innovation, not less.

Understanding the need to get our fiscal house in order and avoid spending that is not absolutely necessary, I am not asking for a funding increase for ONC, despite the fact that additional funding in the health IT space may be warranted. However, in the face of massive cuts by the

Administration, I implore you to at the very least maintain level funding for ONC in FY2018. Now is not the time to slash spending in a core sector that will help make health care less expensive, more efficient, and more effective.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacky Rosen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jacky" being more prominent than the last name "Rosen".

Jacky Rosen,  
Member of Congress