

March 14, 2018

Gopal Khanna, MBA
Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Don Rucker, MD
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Director Khanna and National Coordinator Rucker:

Thank you for your leadership at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to improve the use and safety of health information technology (IT), including electronic health records (EHRs).

Health IT plays an increasingly critical role in the delivery of healthcare services, giving patients and clinicians better information and tools to improve the quality, efficiency, and safety of care. When health IT works as intended, it improves care and patient safety; however, it also introduces new types of risk and has led to unintended consequences. Like any new technology, it is imperative to identify safety challenges that result from product design, the use of systems by clinicians, customization decisions by healthcare facilities, and the interaction of different technologies.

We are writing to inform you that the ECRI Institute, the Alliance for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (AQIPS), the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), and The Pew Charitable Trusts have agreed on advancing a shared vision for a national health IT safety collaborative and the key characteristics needed for its success. Those characteristics include:

- Leading efforts to collaboratively identify, examine, address, and measure progress on nationally-relevant safety concerns;
- Advancing the principle of shared responsibility among all stakeholders by securing participation from: clinicians, hospitals, and other providers; health IT developers; patient safety organizations (PSOs); safety experts; patient representatives; and other interested organizations;
- Aggregating data from multiple sources to identify and prioritize emerging risks for action and provide the rationale for safety improvements; and
- Serving as a clearinghouse for health IT safety tools, solutions, best practices, and resources.

Our shared vision builds upon previous ONC support for a health IT safety collaborative and efforts the agency has taken to help launch it, including as outlined in the commissioned report, *Health IT Safety Center Roadmap: Collaborate on Solutions, Informed by Evidence*.

To achieve success, ECRI Institute, which has a component PSO, has committed to building upon its existing Partnership for Health IT Safety to establish a national health IT safety collaborative to embody each of the characteristics in that shared vision. ECRI's Partnership for Health IT Patient Safety was launched in 2013 and has more than 100 collaborators—representing clinicians, hospitals, technology developers, professional societies, and safety experts—to identify areas of risk and develop best practices and tools to address them. Going forward, it will work with stakeholders to formulate leadership, data, and funding priorities.

The PSO community—as represented by AQIPS—welcomes the establishment of a national health IT safety collaborative and commits to supporting its development, implementation, and operation. Through their PSOs, AQIPS will coordinate the collection of data for the collaborative and help build a safer health care system. AQIPS will leverage its expertise from holding several stakeholder HIT safety summits, serving on governmental policy task forces, and developing tool kits to foster collaboration throughout the health care system to improve patient care, safety and outcomes.

BPC and Pew are lending technical assistance and support to the launch of the national collaborative. BPC has released two sets of consensus recommendations over the last five years, most recently *Patient Safety and Information Technology: Improving IT's Role in Providing Safer Care*, which calls for a coordinated national leadership effort to set health IT safety priorities, coordinate actions to address those priorities, and measure progress. The Pew Charitable Trusts has convened EHR developers, healthcare providers and other stakeholders on ways to improve health IT safety, and recently released a report on ways in which collaboration can reduce opportunities for patient harm.

Over the coming months, we will engage both private and public sector stakeholders to join the National Health IT Safety Collaborative in supporting and improving health IT's role in providing safer, higher quality care. We hope you will support our efforts by sending agency representatives to participate in the national collaborative, disseminate research findings, and undertake other activities, as appropriate.

Thank you and please let us know should you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

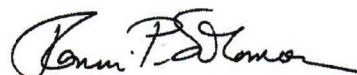
Sincerely,



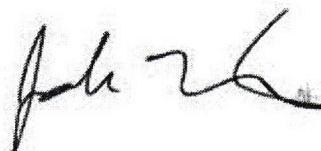
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