



February 5, 2007

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) is pleased to submit our comments regarding the HHS Request for Information "*Improving Health and Accelerating Personalized Health Care Through Health Information Technology and Genomic Information in Population- and Community-based Health Care Delivery Systems*" posted in the Federal Register on November 1, 2006 [FR Doc. Vol 71, No. 211, pages 64282-64284]. Collectively HIMSS members' expertise covers a broad number of healthcare industry areas; however, for the purpose of the response we have confined our comments to intersection between HIT and Genomic Information.

A summary of our observations are as follows:

- The government's connection between electronic health records and genomic information is correct, as EHRs are the nexus of all patient-centric, clinically-derived information.
- Genomic-based clinical testing will have dynamic applications in all medical specialties with particular impacts upon medical decision-making, safety assessment, and risk management.
- Patient-centered care will require strong adherence to existing privacy and security requirements under HIPAA, and will require a maximized effort across the healthcare continuum on guideline development.
- Interoperability between EHR systems is paramount to achieving maximum use of genomic and other clinically-derived information.

Finally, HIMSS applauds the Department's foresight in addressing the policy question on the intersection between HIT and genomic information early in the process will allow for greater coordination between the two efforts. HIMSS looks forward to further discussion on this topic. If you have any questions please contact Tom Leary, [tleary@himss.org](mailto:tleary@himss.org), or 703.837.9814.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of H. Stephen Lieber in black ink.

H. Stephen Lieber, CAE  
President and CEO  
HIMSS

Handwritten signature of George T. Hickman in black ink.

George T. Hickman, CPHIMS, FHIMSS  
Sr. Vice President and Chief Information Officer  
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