



February 5, 2009

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Nelson
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Nelson and Collins:

On behalf of the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME), a membership organization of more than 1,300 healthcare chief information officers across the nation, we are writing to express our strong support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (HR 1) under consideration by the U.S. Senate and its aim to stimulate jobs and revitalize our economy. In particular, we call your attention to Title XIII and other health information technology (health IT) related provisions which represent both good health policy as well as good jobs policy. According to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF), a \$10 billion investment (approximately half of the House proposal) in health information technology would create or retain 212,105 jobs in one year--43,410 jobs directly and another 115,670 jobs indirectly in non-health areas.

The proposed increased spending by hospitals across the country on health IT, for example, will have a "ripple" effect creating additional economic value for the community. Each hospital job, according to the American Hospital Association, supports approximately two or more jobs for every dollar spent. In the State of Maine, the percent of total (non-farm) employment supported by hospital employment is 11.58 percent and in Nebraska, it is 8.63 percent. Nationwide, hospitals account for nearly one of nine jobs.

At a cost of \$20 billion, the health IT provisions of HR 1, according to the Congressional Budget Office, would reduce the number of inappropriate tests and procedures, reduce paperwork and administrative overhead, decrease the number of adverse events resulting from medical errors and improve the quality of care provided to patients. Accelerating the adoption of health IT over the 2011- 2019 period would reduce Medicare spending by \$4.4 billion and result in federal Medicaid savings of \$7.3 billion.


As you know, health information technology has broad bipartisan support as witness hundreds of bills introduced in the 109th, 110th and now the 111th Congress with nearly identical health IT provisions included in both House and Senate stimulus legislation. Moreover, efforts to lay the groundwork to implement electronic medical records, steps toward creation of a nationwide electronic health information network for the secure exchange of health information and related other steps are underway and thus many communities, hospitals, physician practices and involved others are prepared to begin this important endeavor and at the same time, to spur job development.

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CHIME, founded in 1992, advocates for the effective use of information technology in transforming our healthcare delivery system. To that end, we urge full funding of the health IT provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as approved by the House. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you have questions, please contact CHIME's Senior Director of Advocacy Programs, Sharon Canner, scanner@cio-chime.org, (703) 562-8834.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard A. Correll".

Richard A. Correll
President and CEO
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
rcorrell@cio-chime.org

CC: Senate Leadership

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