

31 October 2007

The Honorable Bart Gordon
Chair, U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology
2320 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing on behalf of The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States of America (IEEE-USA) to express our support for H.R. 2406, legislation "to authorize the National Institute of Standards and Technology to increase its efforts in support of the integration of the healthcare information enterprise in the United States". As an organization of technical professionals, we understand the vital role that interoperable standards will play in implementing next-generation healthcare information technology, and we feel that the participation of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) will accelerate the process of adopting such standards.

IEEE-USA is deeply concerned about the state of our healthcare system and believes significant changes are necessary. We believe that development of a National Health Information Network (NHIN), adoption of an online electronic health record (EHR) and providing patient access to and control over personal health information by means of a Personal Health Record (PHR), will help to increase the efficiency of our healthcare system, restrain rising healthcare costs, and reduce medical errors. However, implementation of these next-generation technologies depends upon the coordinated development of interoperable standards. Our views are outlined more fully in the following position statements, available at the indicated URLs:

- National Health Information Network, with Emphasis on Security and Privacy Issues (June 2005), (<http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/positions/NHIN.asp>)
- Interoperability of the National Health Information Network (Nov. 2005) (<http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/positions/NHINinteroperability.html>)
- Home Healthcare Technologies (November 2004) (<http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/positions/healthtechnologies.asp>)

Currently, there are a number of standards development organizations working on healthcare information technology standards in support of these objectives. The IEEE Standards Association is active in the area of medical data interchange and medical device communications. The 11073 family of IEEE Standards, sponsored by the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society (EMBS), supports the development of interoperable standards as a member of the Healthcare Information Technology Panel (HITSP). Currently, there are five

(5) active joint logo IEEE/ISO published standards, and there are further approved IEEE Project Authorization Requests (PARs) under development through 2010.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Deborah Rudolph in the Washington office at (202) 530- 8332 or by email at d.rudolph@ieee.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Meredith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John W. Meredith, P.E.
President, IEEE-USA

Cc: Members of U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology