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August 15, 2013

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Marilyn Tavenner, RN  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dr. Farzad Mostashari, M.D., ScM  
National Coordinator for Health IT  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, DC 20201

Secretary Sebelius, Ms. Tavenner, and Dr. Mostashari:

HIMSS is committed to keeping the healthcare community moving forward on the path to interoperability that leads to information exchange and supports healthcare transformation. Achieving optimal results from Meaningful Use Stage 2 can positively impact the effectiveness of national healthcare transformation. Many are, indeed, ready for the next Stage. For these reasons, ***HIMSS supports maintaining the current Stage 2 Meaningful Use launch schedule.***

However, we also note that eligible professionals, eligible hospitals and vendors are increasingly citing timeline and certification challenges in preparation for Meaningful Use Stage 2. Therefore, ***HIMSS recommends that Year 1 of the Meaningful Use Stage 2 attestation period extend through April 2015 and June 2015 for EHs and EPs, respectively.*** This would encompass 18 months in which EHs and EPs can attest to quarterly Meaningful Use requirements.

Current information from our industry-leading HIMSS Analytics® Database indicates that there are very clear challenges surrounding the ability for some eligible hospitals and tethered ambulatory care facilities preparing for Meaningful Use Stage 2. Our data indicates that as many as 68 percent of eligible hospitals and 41 percent of tethered ambulatory facilities have purchased the necessary software to attest to the 2014 certification requirements, but there are concerns that many may still be waiting for the necessary upgrade to the certified version.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix to [HIMSS Call to Action and Position on Meaningful Use Stage 2](#)

HIMSS Public Policy Principles 3.9 and 3.10<sup>2</sup> support this recommendation by recognizing the importance of realistic goals and timelines to ensure that the health sector has the best possible chance to achieve national goals of improving outcomes and lowering cost. Our members are committed to a successful Stage 2 implementation, and this recommendation comes as a result of that commitment.

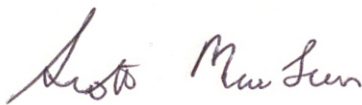
As a cause-based organization, HIMSS strongly supports the development of an interoperable health IT infrastructure that ensures coordinated, safe, high-quality healthcare. The speed at which healthcare transformation is occurring requires the healthcare community to develop a realistic approach to ensure the health IT infrastructure, particularly the adoption and implementation of certified health IT products, results in robust and secure information exchange and care coordination.

At this critical moment for the Meaningful Use program, it is imperative that we work together to ensure health IT supports healthcare transformation. It is in the spirit of working together to achieve timely and effective healthcare transformation that we call on providers, hospitals, and vendors to collaborate on execution plans to ensure the successful completion of the 2014 certification process and implementation of 2014 certified products. We commend the growing number of organizations that have completed the 2014 certification process and encourage others to join their healthcare community colleagues to continue to meet and exceed expectations.

For our part, HIMSS will engage our stakeholders, chapters, events, and resources to articulate steps providers, hospitals, and vendors can take to ensure 2014 certified products are installed, tested, and implemented successfully. We pledge to focus our efforts during [National Health IT Week](#) this September on the [Value of Health IT](#) and the necessary steps to ensure all stakeholders receive the benefits of health IT. We are committed to achieving the national vision for healthcare transformation, as we know you are too.

We look forward to working with HHS and our healthcare community partners to ensure that we maximize the success of the Meaningful Use program, and the positive impact of health IT to support healthcare transformation. If you or your team have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact [Thomas M. Leary](#), Vice President of Government Relations, (703) 562-8814.

Sincerely,



Scott T. MacLean, MBA, CPHIMS, FHIMSS  
Chair, HIMSS Board of Directors  
Deputy CIO, Director of IS Operations  
Partners HealthCare in Boston, MA



H. Stephen Lieber, CAE  
President/CEO

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<sup>2</sup> [2013-2014 HIMSS Public Policy Principles](#)