CENTER *for* MEDICAL
INTEROPERABILITY

February 8, 2016

Karen B. DeSalvo, MD, MPH, MSc
Acting Assistant Secretary for Health
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) Interoperability Shared Commitment Pledge

Dear Dr. DeSalvo:

The Center for Medical Interoperability shares the principle that to achieve an open, connected care for our communities, we all have the responsibility to take action. To further these goals, we support the following principles to advance interoperability among health information systems enabling free movement of data, which are foundational to the success of delivery system reform.

1. **Consumer access:** To help consumers easily and securely access their electronic health information, direct it to any desired location, learn how their information can be shared and used, and be assured that this information will be effectively and safely used to benefit their health and that of their community.

2. **No Blocking/Transparency**: To help providers share individuals' health information for care with other providers and their patients whenever permitted by law, and not block electronic health information (defined as knowingly and unreasonably interfering with information sharing).

3. **Standards**: Implement federally recognized, national interoperability standards, policies, guidance, and practices for electronic health information, and adopt best practices including those related to privacy and security.

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The Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by health systems to change how medical technologies work together. We are guided by our vision - accelerating the seamless exchange of information to improve health care for all. We will ensure that our efforts continue to enable these principles.

- We focus on three pillars: infrastructure, innovation and transformation. We are working to repair the technical architecture supporting health care such that we have a solid foundation upon which to innovate and develop solutions that will drive the healthcare transformation that our nation needs.

- We serve as the research and development arm for health systems, guiding innovation and providing a vendor-neutral focal point to work with solutions providers to compel change. We aim to improve real-time information flow and make technology function seamlessly in the background so clinicians can excel in their jobs and achieve the best possible outcomes for patients.

- We are assembling a technology coalition to develop the architecture that enables interoperability within health systems. We will ensure that the architecture is vendor-neutral and supports real-time one-to-many communication, two-way data exchange, plug-and-play integration of devices and systems, the use of standards, and the highest level of security. This will make it easier and less expensive for devices to talk to each other and for devices to talk to electronic health records and other systems that support clinical decision-making, research and analytics, as well as consumer access to information.

- We are establishing a centralized lab where engineers and other technical experts are solving the shared technical challenges health systems face in getting medical devices, electronic health records and other IT systems to work in a plug-and-play way. In this lab, we will test and certify that devices and IT systems conform to the standardized architecture, thereby giving health systems confidence that the technologies used in patient care will work as expected, safely and securely.

Sincerely,

Ed Cantwell

Ed Cantwell
Executive Director
Center for Medical Interoperability