

September 16, 2014

The Honorable Jim Matheson
221 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Matheson:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) is pleased to support H.R. 5481, the **Flexibility in Health IT Reporting (Flex-IT) Act of 2014**. Your legislation requires the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to make a necessary adjustment to how it implements the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs, which provide incentives and penalties to encourage “meaningful use” of EHRs by hospitals and physicians.

The **Flexibility in Health IT Reporting (Flex-IT) Act of 2014** reduces the reporting period to one-quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2015 (rather than an entire year), whereby hospitals must report to CMS that they are using a 2014 Edition Certified EHR and meeting many more regulatory performance requirements.

Hospitals continue to be challenged with the current regulatory timeline for EHR delivery, installation and implementation. Additionally, they are challenged to find enough other providers capable of receiving a summary of care document to meet the transitions of care objective in the EHR Incentive Program. The recently released EHR Meaningful Use in 2014 Flexibility regulation addressed challenges in FY 2014. However, for hospitals, the challenges will remain in place at the start of FY 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014), when hospitals will be expected to meet all of the program requirements for the entire fiscal year. It is unrealistic to expect that all of the significant implementation issues will be resolved for all hospitals. Without relief from the full year of use and reporting requirement, hospitals will face financial penalties despite their best efforts at compliance.



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America's hospitals are strongly committed to the adoption of EHRs, and your legislation is a positive step toward ensuring the meaningful use program is a success. The AHA looks forward to working with you to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President