



Sumant Ramachandra, M.D., Ph.D.

Senior Vice President, R&D Medical & Regulatory Affairs and Chief Scientific Officer

October 24, 2011

Farzad Mostashari, MD, ScM

Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue S.W.; Suite 729-D

Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Mostashari,

There is a deadly epidemic taking place at hospitals across the country known as hospital-associated infections (HAIs), which the Institute of Medicine estimates contributes to nearly 100,000 deaths a year and adds roughly \$33 billion to healthcare costs annually. However, there is immediate action HHS can take to help stem this problem.

The Health IT Policy Committee in Washington, DC has begun discussions this fall for the final set of recommendations for Meaningful Use (MU), a set of regulatory requirements that providers must comply with by 2015. We believe that the adoption of healthcare information technology (HIT) can address the HAI epidemic and will be an important component of Meaningful Use criteria. We urge your support of its inclusion in the final MU regulation and appeal for your help in preventing any immediate threats to its adoption.

Prominent health care stakeholders have raised concerns about the impact funding cuts by the Congressional super committee would have on HIT adoption and how these cuts could prevent a timely solution to reducing HAIs nationally. With hospitals making capital budgeting decisions now with an eye toward electronic systems that are certified for MU, HHS has a timely opportunity to make a measureable difference in curbing the HAI epidemic.

If HHS acts, the agency would help drive forward a national HIT infrastructure that will help reduce costs, propel better infection prevention and improve patient safety. It will also enable hospitals and providers to take a proactive approach to disease management, while also complying with the latest health and patient safety standards.

The federal government and states have started to recognize the financial and patient safety implications of HAIs, with some states already taking action. Pennsylvania has seen a dramatic decrease in HAIs since implementing state-wide clinical surveillance mandates in 2007. Additionally, the CDC found that the Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs Healthcare System had a 60 percent decrease in methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) incidents with enhanced surveillance.

Hospira looks forward to working with HHS, the ONC, the HIT Policy Committee and the Meaningful Use Workgroup on this issue. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can provide any additional information to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Ramachandra", written in a cursive style.

Sumant Ramachandra, M.D., Ph.D.

Senior Vice President, R&D Medical & Regulatory Affairs and Chief Scientific Officer

cc: Paul Tang, Chair, Meaningful Use Workgroup

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