May 4, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations; and
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Room H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, and Ranking Member Cole,

As you prepare the FY2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you include report language that directs the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to spend $7 million of the funds appropriated on efforts to improve patient matching.

Specifically, we request that the following report language be included:

"The Committee is concerned there is no consistent and accurate way to link patients to their health information as they seek care across the continuum. Health information must be accurate, timely, and robust to inform clinical care decisions for every patient. ONC should work with industry to develop such matching standards that prioritize interoperability, patient safety, and patient privacy. The Committee directs $7 million of the funds appropriated to ONC to be used for this purpose in collaboration with industry."

While Congress rightly prioritized interoperability and digital data exchange in the 21st Century Cures Act and other legislation, progress toward these national priorities is inhibited by patient matching and identification issues. Appropriately prioritizing patient matching efforts at ONC would assist in transitioning the US to a healthcare delivery system that focuses on high value, cost-effective, and patient-centered care. Further, Congress has, on a bipartisan basis, acted to prevent information blocking. Improving patient matching would help enable electronic patient health information to be accurately and consistently connected to the correct patient as it flows between providers.

Patient misidentification continues to be an issue for patient safety, patient privacy, an administrative burden to the healthcare system, and a barrier to public health response. By providing funds for ONC to work with the private sector in improving patient matching standards that prioritize interoperability, patient safety, and patient privacy, Congress will continue its bipartisan progress towards addressing the dire problem of patient misidentification.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Nursing Informatics
Alliance of Community Health Plans
American Academy of Neurology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
Association of Health Information Outsourcing Services (AHIOS)
CIVITAS Networks for Health
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
Duke Center for Health Informatics
eHealth Exchange
Electronic Health Record Association
Health Catalyst
Health Gorilla
Intermountain Healthcare
Interoperability Institute
Just Associates, Inc.
LeadingAge & its Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST)
LexisNexis Risk Solutions
LTPAC Health IT Collaborative
Medical Group Management Association
Michigan Heath Information Network
MRO
National Association for the Support of Long Term Care (NASL)
NextGen Healthcare
OCHIN
PacificEast Research Inc
Parkview Health
Trinity Health
United States QHIN
Velatura HIE Corporation
Velatura Public Benefit Corporation