

May 21, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our nation's healthcare system transformation journey enabling equitable access to high quality care. As we continue our work to advance information sharing and interoperability through health information technology, **the undersigned organizations request you fund the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) at no less than \$86 million, the President's FY2025 budget request.** As the lead agency for health information technology advancement and cross-agency coordination, ONC continues to be a key partner to public and private sector stakeholders to advance the digital health ecosystem. This \$17 million increase in funding for ONC would better reflect their growing responsibilities and provide them with additional necessary resources to help achieve nationwide, standards-based health information exchange to support better health enabled by data.

Since 2004, ONC has largely operated at the same annual funding levels despite being entrusted by Congress with new and resource-intensive authorities and responsibilities through legislation, including the HITECH Act, 21st Century Cures Act, and MACRA. The passage of the HITECH Act of 2009, which propelled our nation's healthcare system into the 21st Century, rapidly accelerated our ability to exchange healthcare records and data to support healthcare delivery and improve patient outcomes. Throughout this transformation, ONC has been a convener for health IT activities across federal agencies, states, and healthcare sector stakeholders, supporting a wide array of initiatives aimed at advancing national goals for better, safer, and more equitable healthcare through a nationwide interoperable health IT infrastructure.¹

Fully funding ONC will allow them to continue their critical work to support a more innovative and data-driven healthcare ecosystem that empowers and protects patients, improves care delivery and provider experience, accelerates research and innovation, and advances health IT capabilities and infrastructure.

¹ <https://www.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/page/2022-03/ONC%20FY%202023%20CI.pdf>

In support of these goals, ONC's initiatives focus on advancing interoperability and information sharing and exchange, coordinating federal and state-level digital health transformation, supporting the modernization of the U.S. public health data infrastructure, while successfully fulfilling the many requirements outlined in the lengthening number of laws enacted since 2004 (i.e. MIPPA, HITECH, MACRA, 21st Century Cures, etc.). Without the much-needed funding boost, we fear that ONC will be hard-pressed to successfully execute the many agency initiatives, and priorities of Congress and the Administration.

ONC plays a leading role in creating a culture of learning around information sharing to ensure that health data is flowing across the entire ecosystem in support of the goals of the 21st Century Cures Act. As the healthcare sector forges ahead toward ubiquitous sharing of information and enabling patient's facile access to their data, and operating under information blocking regulations, ONC has continued their engagement with the stakeholder community on implementation of the critical regulations. Going forward, ONC will continue to be a critical enabler of our health system transformation. ONC will play a key role in helping industry navigate advancements in technology (e.g. artificial intelligence and other predictive algorithms) that have the potential to revolutionize healthcare to benefit patients and providers.

In order to help account for rising costs in salaries, increased costs associated with technology investments, and growing operational and administrative functions we also believe that at a minimum ONC's budget should be adjusted for inflation annually. Such a policy will help alleviate the growing strain placed on ONCs already limited resources.

Our organizations fully support ONC's mission to promote the adoption of health IT and use of health information to enhance the health and well-being of every American, and we thank you for your consideration of this important funding request. If you have any questions, please contact David Gray at david.gray@himss.org.

Sincerely,

Akanimo Cancer Foundation
Alliance for Nursing Informatics
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
American Heart Association
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)
Association of Medical Directors of Information Systems, Inc. (AMDIS)
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition
Care New England Health System
Carequality
Civitas Networks for Health
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
Connected Health Initiative
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

CRISP Shared Services
Dept. Information Technology, University of South Carolina
DirectTrust
DrFirst
eHealth Exchange
EMI Advisors LLC
Global Patient Identifiers, Inc.
Grady Health System
Health Gorilla, Inc.
Healthcare Trust Institute
Hello Better Healthcare, LLC
HIMSS
HIMSS Greater Illinois Chapter
HIMSS Michigan Chapter
HIMSS National Capital Area Chapter
HIMSS New England Chapter
HIMSS Oregon Chapter
HIMSS South Florida Chapter
HIMSS Tennessee Chapter
HIMSS Wisconsin Chapter
HLN Consulting, LLC
HNI Healthcare
Imprivata, Inc.
Intermountain Health
Just Associates
Michigan Health Information Network
MyDirectives
Naphsis
National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved (NHIT)
OCHIN
Regenstrief Institute, Inc.
StarBridge Advisors
Strategic Informatics Solutions
Symbotix LLC
TECHMEDO
The Sequoia Project
Velatura
Verato
Zen Healthcare IT