



STATEMENT REGARDING
Senate Bill 782: AA Promoting the Use of Health Information
Technology

Public Health Committee
March 13th, 2009

The MetroHartford Alliance is Hartford's Chamber of Commerce and the region's economic development leader. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, institutions of higher education, and 34 municipalities. The Alliance's mission is to ensure that the Hartford Region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital so that it thrives as one of the nation's premier places for all people to live, work, play, and raise a family.

We write today in support of Senate Bill 782, *AA Promoting the Use of Health Information Technology*. As you know, health care is one of the largest cost drivers for business, and the greater use of health information technology to improve diagnoses, quality and outcomes will thereby help to reduce cost.

We are encouraged that investment in health information technology (HIT) is a major focus of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The cost of establishing an electronic health records system is a barrier to their use, and the federal government's allocation of funds to the states to enable them to create revolving loan funds which will help providers establish these systems is vital. States must contribute \$1 for every \$5 of federal funding received.

Secondly, the federal stimulus package includes grant funding to help states establish the mechanism necessary to allow different electronic health records systems to then exchange this data. Senate Bill 782 would prepare us to receive this funding by taking the first step to designate eHealth Connecticut the statewide health information exchange network for the state. After being designated, eHealth would seek federal funds for the development of a statewide exchange, and carry responsibility to develop and implement a HIT plan for Connecticut.

We are supportive of Senate Bill 782 with the condition that an appropriate level of privacy safeguards will be honored. Currently the legislation indicates that the standards and protocols for privacy shall be "no less stringent than 'Standards for

Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information," which is critical to our endorsement of this legislation.

In 2007 and 2009, the Connecticut Health Insurance Policy Council and the Connecticut HealthFirst Authority both incorporated recommendations into their final reports that specifically emphasized the need to use e-medical records, electronic information exchanges and telemedicine more efficiently to enhance patient safety by improving diagnoses, quality and outcomes, expediting treatments and reducing redundant care, ultimately lowering costs. It is time that we follow this recommendation to lower the cost of health care in our state while maintaining a strong emphasis on quality and informed, transparent patient care.

Thank you for your support of Senate Bill 782.