

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Matthew Cartwright

“Opportunities and Challenges in Advancing Health Information Technology.”

March 22, 2016

Chairman Jordan, Chairman Hurd, I'd like to thank you both for calling this hearing so that we can hear how the federal government and private industry are working together to create the next generation of health Information Technology (IT).

I represent a largely rural district and know quite well how health IT can bring affordable medical care to those who might not otherwise be able to receive it. That's why I cosponsored the Medicare Telehealth Parity Act of 2015, the 21st Century Cures Act and the TELE-MED Act. Bills like these help medical professionals provide patients with the best health care available, anywhere and at any time. But even with the undeniable benefits technology brings, patient safety must remain our foremost consideration. Technology brings opportunity, but it can also bring unforeseen challenges.

As a trial attorney I've been involved in too many medical malpractice lawsuits where carelessness causes injuries and death, where doctors had made grave and avoidable mistakes. Too often these mistakes are due to failures in communication that left doctors and nurses without all of the patient's information that they needed to provide complete and proper treatment.

Different computer systems, standards, and methods of tracking medical history often mean doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and others involved in the treatment process can't get a complete understanding of the illness. That's why technologies like electronic health records, which contain the complete medical and treatment history of a patient, can quickly and efficiently give providers' insight comprehensive view into what's going on. Standardized, industry-accepted technologies can make that happen.

In the field of Health IT, private industry has a critical role in the process, doing what it does best: Drive innovation and keep America at the leading edge in medical technology. The federal government also has a role to play: making sure these new technologies meet healthcare needs without compromising patient safety. I'm glad that industry and the government are working together to bring about technological advances

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