Reviews

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(Dr. Pat Hegmann)
Changing the way health records are created, stored, maintained, and transferred across the health care industry is not easy. Many observers, however, believe adoption of more sophisticated health IT and practices has been slower than has occurred in other industries. Moreover, greater functionality of electronic health information systems depends on integration in a manner that allows for the interoperable exchange of such information. The primary engine for advancing a better health information system is and will continue to be the private sector. Software and technology vendors are making products with increasing value and function. Participants in the health care industry are improving quality of care and efficiency by adopting new technologies, which provide a good return on investments. The policies and programs in the Better Health Information System Act of 2006 are by no means exhaustive. Moreover, the legislation reflects a subset of efforts already underway through the leadership of the President, the Secretary of HHS, and others. CERTAIN INITIATIVES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES On April 27, 2004, the President signed Executive Order 13335 (EO) announcing his commitment to the promotion of health IT to lower costs, reduce medical errors, improve quality of care, and provide better information for patients and physicians. In particular, the President called for widespread adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) within 10 years so that health information will follow patients throughout their care in a seamless and secure manner. Toward that vision, the EO directed the Secretary of HHS to establish within the Office of the Secretary the position...

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