



Strategic
Health
Information
Exchange
Collaborative

July 18, 2018

Reps Brooks and Eshoo and Members of the Energy and Commerce Committee:

On behalf of the Strategic Health Information Exchange Collaborative (SHIEC), which represents more than 60 Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) across the nation, thank you for your leadership on the reauthorization of the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPAI). SHIEC HIEs have played an important role across the country and have a strong interest in emergency preparedness and disaster relief. SHIEC HIEs have demonstrated the important role they play in federal, state, and local governments. In 2017 SHIEC HIEs in Texas partnered with local providers and patients to access critical medical information in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, and SHIEC HIEs in New York helped to thwart a ransomware attack and safeguard patient information. SHIEC is a recognized leader in medical record interoperability via the Patient Centered Data Home. This initiative allows patients, no matter where they are – whether caught up in emergencies while traveling or displaced by disasters – access to their medical information when and where they need it.

SHIEC is pleased with the proposed direction for this reauthorization of PAHPAI, particularly the broadened scope of Title II regarding “Optimizing State and Local All-Hazards Preparedness and Response.” State and local agencies and hospitals are not the only healthcare stakeholders during a crisis. There are many entities that should be consulted in emergency-planning. Addressing the problems and solutions more broadly allows state and local agencies and hospitals to better prepare and handle disasters.

To this end SHIEC applauds the Committee’s inclusion of not just the brick and mortar infrastructure, but also the “technological infrastructure” while developing guidelines and protocols. SHIEC is also happy to see the broad reference to “healthcare or subject matter experts” which replaces a more restrictive reference to healthcare providers and agencies.

SHIEC recommends inclusion of HIEs specifically. As the data trustees in a community, SHIEC HIEs offer vital services to support a community in crisis. Awareness and realization of this full benefit has yet to be achieved in some areas. Without inclusion of clarifying language, SHIEC is concerned HIEs may still be left out of planning. SHIEC hopes however, that the broader, more inclusive language that the Committee has proposed will be expansive enough to ensure HIEs a seat at the emergency preparedness and disaster relief table.

Thank you,

Kelly Hoover Thompson, CEO