



**Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society**  
**Statement for the Record**  
**Hearing on “LIFT America: Modernizing Our Infrastructure for the Future”**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**May 22, 2019**

The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) is a global advisor and thought leader supporting the transformation of health through information and technology. As a mission driven non-profit, HIMSS offers a unique depth and breadth of expertise in health innovation, public policy, workforce development, research and analytics to advise global leaders, stakeholders and influencers on best practices in health information and technology. HIMSS membership encompasses more than 72,000 individuals and 630 corporate organizations.

On behalf of our members, thank you for holding today’s hearing and for the Committee’s leadership and focus on strengthening our future by addressing the nation’s aging infrastructure. We share your overall goal of creating a more modern and robust America, and, in particular, wish to highlight two areas of significant importance to the health IT community addressed in the *Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow’s (LIFT) America Act*.

**Making Necessary Investments to Strengthen Our Public Health Core Infrastructure**

HIMSS strongly supports the unprecedented investment included in the LIFT America Act to employ a system-wide, enterprise approach to strengthening the core public health infrastructure at the CDC and at state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments as well as across the health care sector. As a founding partner of the [Data: Elemental to Health](#) campaign, HIMSS is committed to a future where more, better, and faster data, yielded by secure, interoperable, integrated systems will allow public health professionals and policymakers to make better decisions and get ahead of chronic, emerging, and urgent threats.

The significant funding authorized in the bill would enable critical improvements in the capabilities of the CDC regarding information technology, data, and data systems, particularly as it relates to public health data collection, transmission, exchange, and analysis. The funding will also support enhanced interoperability between data systems across the public health community. Modernizing public health data exchange and expanding a highly-skilled workforce will increase data quality, decrease administrative burden, improve connectivity and coordination between health care and public health, and ensure sensitive health data is protected from growing cybersecurity threats.

**Expanding Access to Critical Broadband Services**

Additionally, HIMSS supports the significant provisions in the *LIFT America Act* aimed at closing the digital divide by making crucial investments in broadband deployment across

the United States. Our members understand that reliable and affordable broadband is necessary to realize the full potential of health technologies, including telehealth and remote patient monitoring. Yet, there continues to be a great disparity in access to these vital services. According to the FCC, at least 21.3 million Americans, including many in rural and underserved areas, still lack access to broadband.<sup>1</sup> Research shows this lack of access is negatively affecting both patients' health and clinicians' ability to provide the care needed to make their communities healthier.<sup>2</sup>

To address this significant gap, the bill appropriately prioritizes funding for broadband deployment projects with a goal of bringing broadband access to 98% of the country. Specifically, it would target unserved and underserved areas, unserved anchor institutions (such as schools, hospitals, and other medical providers), and tribal lands. The authorized funds would provide the resources necessary to reduce the access disparity and provide every American with the countless benefits that broadband access enables.

Again, thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to modernizing our nation's infrastructure. The impacts of prolonged lack of investment affect every community across the United States. We look forward to working with the Committee to advance policies that support increased access to care and better health for all Americans. If you would like additional information, please contact Samantha Burch, HIMSS Senior Director of Congressional Affairs, at [sbburch@himss.org](mailto:sbburch@himss.org) or 312-515-8157.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-357271A1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/connect2health.key\\_findings.pdf](https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/connect2health.key_findings.pdf)