iHealthBeat
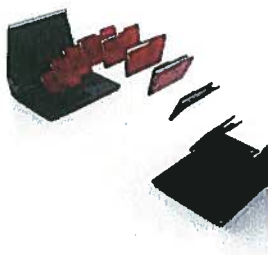Reporting Technology's Impact on Health Care

Coalition Calls for Action Against EHRs That Block Interoperability

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

The Health IT Now Coalition is calling on HHS to decertify electronic health record systems that require extra modules or additional costs to share data, *Politico*'s "Morning eHealth" reports. The group also is calling on HHS and lawmakers to investigate firms that obstruct data sharing while participating in federal incentive programs (Gold, "Morning eHealth," *Politico*, 6/16).

Background

The calls come after a recent RAND Corporation report found that a lack of interoperability hinders technologies that otherwise could lower costs and improve care quality (Health IT Now Coalition release, 6/13). Specifically, the report found that Epic, an EHR vendor, was operating a "closed platform" that limited interoperability.

In response, an Epic spokesperson noted that the report was authored by two Department of Veterans Affairs researchers who suggested the VA health system's platform as an alternative to Epic's system ("Morning eHealth," *Politico*, 6/16).

Details of Call for Investigation

In a release, Health IT Now Executive Director Joel White said, "The RAND report reiterates what those in the health IT industry know well: Interoperability must be a priority if we truly want to improve patient outcomes, decrease costs and achieve a technology enabled system."

The coalition calls for HHS to:

- Work with lawmakers to investigate firms that could be inhibiting data sharing while being involved in federal incentive programs; and
- Revoke certification of EHR systems that require extra modules, expenses or other customization for data sharing.

White said that $24 billion in taxpayer money has been paid over the past three years to health IT systems that do not easily share data (Health IT Now Coalition release, 6/13).