May 12, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your leadership and bipartisan dedication to supporting our nation’s healthcare system transformation journey. As we continue our work to advance information sharing and interoperability capabilities, the undersigned organizations urge you to fully fund the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) at the President’s proposed FY24 budget request of $103.6 million. ONC has long served as the key partner to public and private sector stakeholders to advance the health information and technology ecosystem. This $37 million increase in funding would provide ONC with the necessary resources to help achieve nationwide, standards-based health information exchange.

Since 2004, ONC has largely operated at the same annual funding levels despite being entrusted by Congress with new authorities and responsibilities through legislation, including the HITECH Act, 21st Century Cures Act, and MACRA. The passage of the HITECH Act of 2009, which propelled our nation’s healthcare system into the 21st Century, rapidly accelerated our ability to exchange healthcare records and data to support healthcare delivery and improve patient outcomes. Throughout this ongoing transformation, ONC has been a convener for health IT activities across federal agencies, states, and healthcare sector stakeholders, supporting a wide array of initiatives aimed at advancing national goals for better, safer, and more equitable healthcare through a nationwide interoperable health IT infrastructure.¹

We believe that fully funding ONC will allow it to continue its critical work to advance interoperability and information exchange, coordinate federal and state-level digital health transformation, support the modernization of the U.S. public health data infrastructure, empower patients and clinicians with the most advanced information and technology capabilities, and successfully fulfill the many requirements outlined in the lengthening number of laws enacted since 2004 (i.e., MIPPA, HITECH, MACRA, 21st

¹ https://www.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/page/2022-03/ONC%20FY%202023%20CJ.pdf
Century Cures, etc.). Without the much-needed funding boost, we fear that ONC will be hard-pressed to successfully execute the many agency initiatives, and priorities of Congress and the Administration.

ONC further plays a leading role in creating a culture of learning around information sharing to ensure that health data is flowing across the entire ecosystem in support of the goals of the 21st Century Cures Act. We appreciate ONC convening and supporting the stakeholder community on implementation of the information blocking regulations as the healthcare sector continues to forge a pathway for ubiquitous sharing of patient information and enabling patient's facile access to their data. Going forward, ONC will be an even more critical enabler of our health system transformation, including serving as the technical advisor across HHS on implementing information sharing and ensuring that patients, providers, developers, networks, insurers, and other stakeholders truly benefit from the new rules. Moreover, implementing these regulations positions the health ecosystem to leverage robust data sharing that will accelerate necessary advances in public health, patient empowerment, health equity, population health, and medical research.

Our organizations fully support ONC’s mission to promote the adoption of health IT and use of health information to enhance the health and well-being of every American, and we thank you for your consideration of this important funding request. If you have any questions, please contact David Gray at david.gray@himss.org.

Sincerely,

ADVault, Inc.
ADVION (NASL)
Akamino Cancer Foundation
Akron Children’s Alliance for Nursing Informatics
American Board of Quality Assurance & Utilization Review Physicians, Inc.
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
American Heart Association
American Medical Informatics Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition
Carequality
Civitas Networks for Health
College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
Connected Health Initiative
Consortium for State and Regional Interoperability (CSRI)
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
District Medical Group
eHealth Exchange
EMI Advisors LLC
Executives for Health Innovation (EHI)
Grady Health System
Health Gorilla
Health Wallet
Healthcare Leadership Council
HIMSS
HIMSS National Capital Area Chapter
HIMSS Austin Chapter
HIMSS Colorado Chapter
HIMSS Michigan Chapter
HIMSS Midwest Gateway Chapter
HIMSS Oregon Chapter
HIMSS Puerto Rico Chapter
HIMSS Wisconsin Chapter
Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise USA (IHE USA)
Intermountain Health
IT Consulting Group LLC
Leavitt School of Health, Western Governors University
Mayo Clinic
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Michigan Health Information Network Shared Services
NAPHSIS
National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved (NHIT)
OCHIN
Orchid Healthcare Solutions
PointClickCare
Southeast Michigan Health Information Exchange (SEMHIE)
Strategic Informatics Solutions
Superlanet Inc
TECHMEDO
The Sequoia Project
Upper Peninsula Health Information Exchange (UPHIE)
Velatura Public Benefit Corporation
Women’s Digital Health
Zen Healthcare IT