

August 11, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol, H-232
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan,

On behalf of the undersigned medical specialty organizations, we applaud you for your commitment to move a compromise 21st Century Cures bill in the fall. As Senate Majority Leader McConnell said, this could be the most important legislation Congress passes this year.

The ultimate goal of both the House and the Senate bills is to accelerate innovation, boost research, streamline drug and device approvals, and enhance health information technology (HIT) interoperability. We believe these things individually and combined will ultimately improve patient care and improve outcomes. They will also increase the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care delivery.

Specifically, the bills include provisions focused on National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding and boosting innovation. They will help the NIH and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recruit top talent, improve research focused on women and minorities, and encourage young investigators. They include a system of more rapidly approving drugs and devices by decreasing paperwork and streamlining the approval process. Additionally, they will help address the executive branch “Moonshot Agenda” to find a cure for cancer and advance precision medicine.

The other major focus of both pieces of legislation is on HIT. The stated goals are to improve and legislate more rapid advancement in interoperability. The HIT provisions aim to reduce the documentation burden for physicians, improve access to information for patients, and improve physician access to patient medical records. We are particularly supportive of language included in the Senate HIT legislation that creates a definition of clinician-led clinical data registries and requires that HIT vendors share data with those registries as a condition of certification to ensure such registries have efficient and cost-effective access to clinical outcomes data.

Thank you for your consideration of these views. We look forward to working with you to help move this proposal through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Academy of Dermatology
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
American Association of Neurological Surgeons

Congress of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Rheumatology
American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society
American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society for Surgery of the Hand
American Urological Association
Arthroscopy Association of North America
Cervical Spine Research Society
J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society
Musculoskeletal Tumor Society
North American Spine Society
Orthopaedic Research Society
Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America
Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society
Scoliosis Research Society
Society for Thoracic Surgeons
Society for Vascular Surgery

cc:

Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Senator Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Representative Kevin McCarthy, House Majority Leader

Representative Fred Upton, Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee