



The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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December 1, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chair
Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Chairman Alexander, and Ranking Member Murray;

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I write to thank you for your hard work and dedication to the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act.

Founded in 1964, STS is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,400 surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lung, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

We are supportive of many of the provisions included in this groundbreaking legislation. Foremost, we are extremely grateful that the final legislation includes a definition of “clinician-led clinical data registry.” This recognition represents a great step forward for registries that contribute to the advancement of health care quality. The statutory definition is critically important because it explicitly includes the features that make clinical registry data unique and powerful. We appreciate the opportunity to have had input into the development of this definition – making sure that registries maintain these high standards.

Secondly, we are grateful to the authors for prioritizing leveraging electronic health records to improve patient care. This provision of the 21st Century Cures bill provides that any registry interested in being certified will be able to

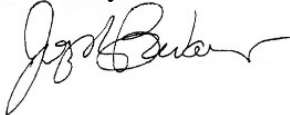
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communicate directly with electronic health records (EHR) and those EHR vendors are prohibited from the practice of “data-blocking.”

Thank you for your commitment to improving patient’s lives with 21st Century Cures. We look forward to working on many of these new initiatives to help change the face of health care in America. Should you have any questions, please contact STS Director of Government Relations Courtney Yohe at 202-787-1222 or cyohe@sts.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Bavaria", written in a cursive style.

Joseph E. Bavaria, MD
President