

**Statement of Michael Nolte  
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GE Healthcare IT**

**Before the Information Exchange Workgroup of the HIT Policy Committee  
October 20, 2009**

Good afternoon, I'm Mike Nolte, General Manager, Upstream Marketing for GE Healthcare IT. On behalf of GE, I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss issues related to the electronic exchange of laboratory data.

GE Healthcare is a leading vendor of HIT, having a wide range of solutions to support medical practices, hospitals, integrated delivery networks, public health organizations, and payor groups.

GE has been a strong supporter of the HITECH Act and the work of the HIT Policy Committee. We believe that your work, as utilized by ONC and CMS, can produce a great leap forward in health care quality and efficiency.

I'm especially pleased to be testifying with such distinguished colleagues.

**Overall Principles**

Improving patient safety and patient care are the two most important concepts that guide GE Healthcare solutions. The exchange of a patient's lab results is critical to these goals. It occurs at multiple points in the care continuum and is vital to providing the right patient care in a timely manner. Unfortunately, there are barriers to timely, accurate, and effective exchange.

The most notable barriers are a lack of standard terminology and of accepted, common workflows related to the exchange of lab information. As a result, ensuring that this information reaches the appropriate destination is often difficult, expensive, and time consuming.

Based on our careful analysis, we suggest that the workgroup consider several points, reflecting our perspective as an experienced HCIT solutions provider with customers in a wide range of market segments. I refer you to our responses to your questionnaire for greater detail.

- Much like the standards that exist in other areas of HCIT, a standard mechanism for exchanging lab information should be implemented and certified both for laboratories and EHRs to ensure accurate and efficient mechanisms for getting the right patient results to the right provider.
- GE Healthcare supports the standards bodies that are working tirelessly to improve our healthcare infrastructure and the means by which we share patient information. Specifically, we support the standards specified by

the ANSI/HITSP Capability 126 and recommended by the HIT Standards Committee which were recognized by the Department of Health and Human Services in January 2008 and the ongoing work of ANSI/HITSP to meet the laboratory orders extensions request given to it by ONC.

- Standard workflows and mechanisms for collecting and disseminating information will help ensure that the right people with the right roles are viewing information. By outlining a structure that defines the scenarios to support various use cases for lab information exchange, we can ensure that patient security is protected and that information is complete, readable, and accessible based on the consuming individual's role.
- Leveraging infrastructures such as standards-based HIEs and other standards-based information exchange technologies can eliminate the extensive point-to-point lab to EMR communications infrastructures that currently exist. Secure, centralized mechanisms for transporting data, can eliminate the high costs associated with maintaining many individual connections. These costs are a burden for every link in the healthcare chain and should be solved with existing, advanced HCIT solutions.
- Finally, as must be the case with other areas of healthcare and HIT policy, regulatory decisions and policies must be as simple and clear as possible and issued with considerable advance notice in order to create a predictable path for providers and vendors.

### **Conclusions**

GE believes the work being done by HHS, the Policy and Standards Committees and ANSI/HITSP will transform our industry and healthcare system. We believe that the focus on patient care, patient safety, and patient involvement in their care decisions will continue to be top priorities and goals for policy and standards decisions.

Exchange of patient lab information and results is central to providing accurate and timely patient care and we are eager to support policy and standards decisions in this arena.

We look forward to working cooperatively with HHS and the Policy and Standards Committees in support of recommendations around the electronic exchange of laboratory information in HIT settings.

Thank you very much.