

Headquarters

4501 College Blvd., STE 225 -
Leawood, KS 66211-1921 -
816-756-3140
Fax: 816-756-3144

**Government Affairs Office**

1025 Vermont Ave., NW;
Suite 1100 -
Washington, DC 20005
202-639-0550
Fax: 202-639-0559

February 26, 2016

Karen DeSalvo, M.D.
Acting Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. DeSalvo,

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) shares the principle that to achieve an open, connected care for our communities, we all have the responsibility to take action. NRHA commits to further these goals, and commits to the following principles to advance interoperability among health information systems enabling free movement of data, which are foundational to the success of delivery system reform.

1. **Consumer access:** To help consumers easily and securely access their electronic health information, direct it to any desired location, learn how their information can be shared and used, and be assured that this information will be effectively and safely used to benefit their health and that of their community.
2. **No Blocking/Transparency:** To help providers share individuals' health information for care with other providers and their patients whenever permitted by law, and not block electronic health information (defined as knowingly and unreasonably interfering with information sharing).
3. **Standards:** Implement federally recognized, national interoperability standards, policies, guidance, and practices for electronic health information, and adopt best practices including those related to privacy and security.

To further these goals, we will support and implement, where appropriate, technologies such as Direct, FHIR, C-CDA, API, and other universally supported protocols. Further, we will advocate and support incremental approaches that further exchange between referral partners in as rapid a manner as possible. We feel that increasing the amount of shared electronic health information offers such a great opportunity to improve patient care that we cannot wait for "perfect" solutions any longer.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with you and your agency toward realizing these important goals.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Alan Morgan
Chief Executive Officer