



Kaiser Foundation Health Plan
Program Offices

February 4, 2016

Karen DeSalvo, MD, MPH
Acting Assistant Secretary for Health
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. DeSalvo,

On July 21, 2015, Kaiser Permanente celebrated 70 years of providing high-quality, affordable health care and services to improve the health and wellness of its members, patients, and the communities it serves.

Kaiser Permanente is committed to providing effective, secure, timely, and appropriate access to health information. Our integrated care and coverage model of person-centered total health is supported by comprehensive information technology systems that enable patients and providers to access integrated longitudinal health records and to use or share that information securely to benefit health and wellness.

As permitted under applicable law, providers within and outside Kaiser Permanente can access and exchange data to support patient care. Kaiser Permanente strongly supports advancing the interoperability of health information systems by adopting and implementing mature, proven nationally recognized health IT standards, policies and practices. We also strongly support efforts to reduce or eliminate barriers to exchange, including deliberate and unreasonable attempts to impede or "block" information access.

Kaiser Permanente actively promotes these principles, for example:

- We offer members and patients My Health Manager on kp.org, a secure web portal to the electronic record and to other features, such as care team communications, health education, appointment scheduling, or prescription refills. Kp.org has been recognized for excellence with numerous awards ranging from its usability design, or availability, to its tools for patient self-management of chronic conditions.

- Our experts in technology, informatics, and clinical care actively serve in the development of national and international standards for interoperable health IT in care delivery, administrative simplification, quality assessment and improvement, research, and health information exchange.
- We innovate and operate health IT to demonstrate benefits and challenges in real world implementations. These efforts include consumer health devices, big data analytics, or clinical technology. Our efforts in health information exchange include participation in state and regional HIEs such as Colorado's CORHIO, Maryland's CRISP and San Diego's HealthConnect; the nationwide eHealth Exchange (<http://sequoiaproject.org/ehealth-exchange/>), the Sequoia Project (<http://sequoiaproject.org/>), Care Connectivity Consortium (<http://www.careconnectivity.org/>), CarEquality (<http://sequoiaproject.org/carequality/>), and the EU-US Trillium Bridge Project (<http://www.trilliumbridge.eu/>). Through these efforts, Kaiser Permanente now exchanges health information with organizations in all 50 states.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our position on these important principles, and we hope they will help in continuing to advance our collective journey towards achieving interoperability among health information systems across the country.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Jamie Ferguson
Vice President
Health IT Strategy and Policy