Book: *Ending the Document Game: Connecting and Transforming Your Healthcare Through Information technology.*

Author: The Commission on Systemic Interoperability (CSI)

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The CSI was created by the United States Congress and President George W. Bush in the Medicare Modernization Act. This independent panel was to create a blueprint of a connected system of healthcare information and recommendations to hasten its creation. This study focuses on three major recommendations to accomplish a major transformation in the health care industry. They include: Adoption, Interoperability and Connectivity.

- Adoption covers the requirement to engage both the health care providers and the consumers into a cohesive group of end users. This framework would provide the proper environment to create, store, exchange, and utilize the emerging electronic health record. This report is specifically concerned related to privacy safeguards and regulatory overhead.
- Interoperability focuses on the need for all the health care systems to share data. Today's market place finds vendors selling systems that are very proprietary. The architecture is specifically designed to insure the clients will continue to use these systems and pay the license fee for years to come. It is, therefore, not in the vendor's interest to sell an open system.
- Connectivity is achieved when the networks create a conduit to move medical data from one system to another seamlessly. The largest gap to fill here is the one between the patient and his or her healthcare information. There needs to be uniform privacy laws and severe punishments for those who violate these laws.

Successful implementation of any nationwide information system, by its nature, is an extremely complex undertaking. This report provides an excellent description of the significant issues facing our nation's ability to reconstruct the current business and regulatory practices. It is an excellent source of information and strategies effecting all health care professions. Just the effort required to get clinicians and consumers to use information networks is a major challenge. Book is well structured and contains a wealth of ideas.

In addition, this reports makes suggestions that are intended to improve provider workflow and streamline many of the standard business processes. Most of these are benefits derived by the proper application of automation in a business setting such as, reduced printing, illegible handwriting, legal signatures, sharing information across the healthcare continuum. Perhaps more importantly is the adaptation of the health care information system on the patient population.

The healthcare providers want to improve in three major areas of patient communications: better interaction with patients, better doctor-patient relationships and more contact time with patients. In each of the situations, the report provides solid suggestions supported by success stories. The basic issue seems to stem from providers spending too much time on administrative work. Automation can reduce that effort drastically if properly applied. The concept of capturing data once

on a patient and making that information available to the provider across offices or health care networks would increase productive patient time and quality of care simultaneously. Major benefits will be realized by having this patient information available to support public health and safety. The current stand alone and proprietary systems do not support medical surveillance. When there are outbreaks of disease or chemical or biological attacks, the current system does not sound an alarm or provide critical information before a mass casualty emergency arises. With interoperable tools available, even first responders will have better information to base their response upon. Public healthcare officials will more readily discover a disease outbreak in its beginning before it becomes a pandemic.

Throughout the publication are supporting interviews with providers, patients, family members and others. These real world stories regarding the introduction of interoperable automated information systems describe how various applications have greatly improved a facet of health care in this country.

The last section provides the reader with a plethora of information on current efforts for upgrading health care information systems. Provided are specific bills currently in Congress designed to address some of the recommendations presented in this report. Existing Government programs and depart activities are provided in detail including a point of contact. The last part of this section contains a chart of many of the health information technology efforts across the United States. The University of Maryland, Center for Health Information and Decision Systems constructed a great map of the United States with many of the health care information technology projects identified. The chart lists what area is effected by the initiatives, name of the effort, description of the project, and the organization leading the effort.

In closing, I found this report to be extremely well done. Many of the points highlighted are very thought provoking. Implementing these ideas will take a concerted effort by patients, health care providers, all levels of Government, and insurance carriers. This report is strongly recommended not just for information technologists but for all health care managers. It describes the future of our industry.