

## **Roadmap For Health IT Offered In NYC**

Apr 15, 2008

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and members of the New Democrat Coalition today urged Congress to take action on measures that would encourage rapid nationwide implementation of health information technology. At a press conference with the mayor, the New Dems unveiled a roadmap that will guide their efforts to achieve a fully interoperable health IT exchange by 2018 with adoption by at least 75 percent of providers. The New Dems made their announcement shortly after meeting with Mayor Bloomberg to discuss the successful transition that New York City is making from paper records to safe, secure electronic health records.

“Nationwide, we’re paying -- heavily -- for a system that’s geared toward caring for us once we’re sick,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “We’d be better served by a system that’s designed to keep us healthy, which is what we are doing in New York City. Electronic medical records are key to putting the focus on prevention rather than treatment, and we’re very grateful for the opportunity to share what we’re doing in New York to shape a national program.”

“Moving our health care system into the 21st Century will save money and improve patient care. The New Democrat Coalition believes we should start by establishing a nationwide electronic medical records system,” said Congressman Joseph Crowley. “New York City successfully implemented a Health IT system, and it should serve as a model for Congress as we work to establish a nationwide program.”

In New York City, EHR’s are already used by more than 200 primary-care providers that care for more than 200,000 people. The city is on track to meet its goal of equipping more than 1,000 local health care providers-many of them practicing in the city’s poorest and sickest neighborhoods-with secure EHR systems by the end of the year, benefiting more than a million patients. This effort will create the nation’s largest community-based EHR network.

Broad implementation of Health IT will help improve safety, quality, access to information, public health, and patient involvement. In the broader context of health reform, universal implementation of health IT can help effectively reach the ultimate goal of meaningful health coverage for every American.

“As New Dems we are serious about our commitment to using innovation to enable us to meet our goals, and that is why we are so excited about the tremendous promise health IT holds for improving health care in America.,” said Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz, Co-Chair of the New Dem Health Care Task Force. “If implemented widely and used effectively, health IT will move America’s health care system forward in leaps and

bounds by increasing quality, saving lives, and making more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.”

The RAND Corporation estimates widely implemented, interoperable, and effectively employed health IT could save the U.S. \$147 billion per year in increased efficiency, decreased hospitalizations, and decreased medical errors.

“Harnessing the power of cutting edge medical technology is essential to improving medical outcomes and reducing health care costs,” said Capps, Co-Chair of the New Democrat Coalition Health Care Task Force. “We need to build a health information technology infrastructure that brings medical records and prescribing into the 21st Century while protecting the privacy of patients.”

Representing the largest payer of health care in the United States, Congress must pass legislation to facilitate a firm infrastructure, standards, and financing system to solidify our long term commitment to health IT.

“Through my work in the health care field, I have seen firsthand the potential for savings and gains in quality of care that can be achieved through health IT adoption. For every dollar we invest in health IT, we could realize \$41 in savings - in addition to saving thousands of lives and preventing innumerable medical errors,” Congressman Jason Altmire, Co-Chair of the New Dem Health Care Task Force said. “States, localities, and our nation’s hospitals are already leading efforts to implement health IT on their own. Congress needs to take action now to ensure we establish national standards on interoperability and privacy, so we can move toward universal use of health IT.”