



Medical IT Saves Lives And Money

June 21, 2008

Kudos to Secretary Michael O. Leavitt and the Department of Health and Human Services for launching a pilot program to help increase the use of information technology in health care.

As the article “Push for digital health records” (June 11) highlights, increasing the use of information technology could save lives and dollars by reducing medical errors and increasing the efficiency of our health care system.

In fact, some studies have suggested that this could save more than 250 lives and about \$452 million every day.

But the HHS program alone will not be enough to spur widespread adoption of technology that will make possible such improvements. Congress must also do its part.

Right now, legislation that would create uniform standards for health care IT is stalled in the House and the Senate.

Without these standards, the proliferation of this technology in health care is not just unlikely but almost impossible.

I call on Congress to break the gridlock and pass health IT standards before the summer recess, because America shouldn't have to wait for a 21st-century health care system.

John Castellani

Washington

The writer is president of the Business Roundtable.