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September 18, 2014

The Honorable Renee Ellmers
U.S. House of Representatives
426 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ellmers:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for the Flexibility in Health IT Reporting Act of 2014, H.R. 5481, legislation that would shorten the 2015 reporting period for the Meaningful Use (MU) Program from one year to 90 days. We believe that this relief is an important first step in our broader strategy to ensure that thousands of physicians and other providers are able to meet Stage 2 MU requirements and continue to participate in the program.

Physicians have faced significant problems with the MU program, including technology delays, rigid measures, and shifting regulatory requirements. While the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published regulations this year to address certain technology problems, the agency failed to consider the need for flexibility in the program requirements, leaving this problem unaddressed for future stages. Indeed, MU participation data released in September have validated our concerns, as a little more than one percent of eligible professionals have attested and earned an incentive in 2014.

Given that many physicians are struggling with existing MU requirements and will be facing more stringent measures in 2015, we support the initial relief offered by a shorter reporting period. Stakeholders are also united on this program change, as several organizations, including the AMA, recently sent the attached letter calling for a 90-day reporting period as well as increased program flexibility. To truly mitigate the problems with the MU program, we believe that this first step should also be combined with added relief in meeting all of the MU measures, as physicians continue to face an unreasonable pass-fail program. Together, additional time and flexibility can reinforce the significant investments in the MU program and ensure future provider participation.

Our commitment to the success of the MU program remains strong. We believe that, rather than stopping momentum, additional time and flexibility will keep the program on track. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and improve the MU program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

James L. Madara, MD

Attachment