



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FAH STATEMENT ON MEANINGFUL USE FINAL RULE**

The following statement was released today by Chip Kahn, President and CEO of the Federation of American Hospitals (FAH).

The Federation of American Hospitals supports today's final rule on the implementation of the HITECH legislation. The rule recognizes many of the practical concerns included by the FAH in comments on the proposed rule, and should help provide the impetus for hospitals to advance the use and dissemination of health information technology for improved patient care.

As the hospital representative to the previous Administration's American Health Information Community, I know that policymakers have been searching for an effective approach to bring about the broad adoption of interoperable health information technology for patient care. The final rule takes important steps to provide a framework for the seamless flow of patient information for hospitals and clinicians that will transform the medical care of Americans.

Today's rule not only establishes a blueprint for making electronic medical records a reality for patients, but also provides the basis for the use of tools critical to the transformation of health care delivery envisioned in and mandated by health reform.

Yet there is further work to do. First, the Congressional framers of HITECH clearly intended that its financial incentives flow to all qualifying hospitals. But under today's final rule, multiple hospitals under a single Medicare provider number will not receive their full allotments. Patients of a hospital should be confident that their hospital is receiving the full HITECH incentive, regardless of whether that hospital has an individual provider number or shares a provider number with other hospitals. So, it is essential that Congress clarifies the definition of an eligible hospital to put all hospitals on a level playing field for the distribution of incentive payments.

Second, it is critical that the HITECH incentive payments recognize the continuum of patient care. So, Congress should expand the legislation's reach to include post-acute hospitals and care. Doing so is a step we must take to reap the full rewards that information technology can offer patients through improved care integration and coordination.

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The Federation of American Hospitals is the national representative of investor-owned or managed hospitals and health systems. Our members include general community and teaching hospitals in urban and rural areas as well as rehabilitation, long-term, cancer and psychiatric hospitals.