

Physicians Caring for Texans

November 2, 2015

The Honorable John Cornyn **United States Senate** Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

On behalf of the 48,000-plus physician and medical student members of the Texas Medical Association, I am writing to ask your help in stopping yet another costly government intrusion into the practice of medicine.

To Texas physicians, it appears the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and other federal agencies never seem to tire in their campaigns to heap more useless requirements onto physicians' practices. The most recent example involves the latest set of regulations governing the Meaningful Use program. Despite the well-reasoned concerns expressed by TMA and organized medicine, CMS insists on moving ahead with Stage 3 of the Meaningful Use requirements.

Meaningful Use started out as a well-intentioned attempt to give physicians incentives to adopt electronic health records. No federal program ever bore a more inaccurate name than "Meaningful Use." It's no surprise that physicians around the country have begun calling it "Meaningless Abuse."

The convoluted and tedious electronic health records requirements are certainly not meaningful to doctors nor our patients. Neither the electronic health records nor the Meaningful Use regulations were designed with the realities of medical practice in mind. Together, they leave us clicking more but achieving less.

We believe Congress must enact legislation that provides positive incentives for physicians to acquire and maintain health information technology. Until EHR systems truly add value to medical care and can seamlessly interact with other systems, we want Congress to reform the program and eliminate federal mandates that compel physicians to engage in unnecessary activities and reporting.

In that vein, please cosponsor and support S 2141, the Transparent Ratings on Usability and Security to Transform Information Technology (TRUST IT) Act of 2015 by Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.); and HR 3309, the Flex-IT 2 Act, by Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-N.C.).

Texas physicians are asking for your help. Please stop CMS from forcing physicians to use technology that is too expensive and too disruptive to patient care.

Help us put real meaning back into medical practice.

Sincerely,

Tom Garcia, MD

President