



For Immediate Release

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ACC Media Contact

Amy Murphy
Associate Director, Media Relations
amurphy@acc.org
202.375.6476

Larry Farnsworth
Crosby~Volmer International
Communications
lfarnsworth@crosbyvolmer.com
202.232.6574

ACC CEO Jack Lewin Statement on Senate HELP Health IT Hearing

Washington, D.C. – The American College of Cardiology’s (ACC) CEO, Jack Lewin, M.D. today released the following statement addressing the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions’ hearing on Health Information Technology:

“I’m encouraged with the direction Chairman Kennedy is taking the Committee to improve the infrastructure of health information technology.

“Technology has changed the way we do business. We communicate online. We shop online. We bank online. Many even self-diagnose illness online. But the medical community has a communications gap, and it’s time we bring the delivery of health care online.

"Investment in health IT has the potential to change the health care landscape, as long as the technology is interoperable with the systems of other offices, hospitals and labs. The money Obama's plan puts into the infrastructure will be wasted if interoperability standards are not into place. These standards will allow clinicians to access information to help make better informed medical decision to avoid adverse drug events, and to encourage patients to adhere to evidence-based medication regimens.

“In today’s world there are too many prescriptions, too many procedures and too many variables for doctors to still be relying on paper records that cannot be readily cross-referenced, shared or accessed. Interoperable systems that share medical records, warn of drug interactions and facilitate the process of healing are necessary. Some in the medical community have resisted progress, and it is unfortunate our government has not stepped-in to promote implementation and adoption of health IT infrastructure and standards.

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“At the ACC, we believe there are other immediate steps the Committee can take to dramatically improve the quality of care in this country and drive down the long-term cost of care. Using stimulus dollars to mandate the implementation of electronic prescriptions and electronic medical records, along with establishing standards to ensure interoperability across IT systems are just some of them.

“The President-elect has wisely asked Congress to authorize the use of stimulus dollars to improve the nation’s health IT infrastructure. With 43 percent of the Medicare dollars being spent on our nation’s number one killer, heart disease, I believe this is an appropriate use of stimulus dollars that can ultimately help increase the efficiency of delivering quality health care at a lower cost to our nation’s pocketbook.”

About the American College of Cardiology

The American College of Cardiology is leading the way to optimal cardiovascular care and disease prevention. The College is a 36,000-member nonprofit medical society and bestows the credential Fellow of the American College of Cardiology upon physicians who meet its stringent qualifications. The College is a leader in the formulation of health policy, standards and guidelines, and is a staunch supporter of cardiovascular research. The ACC provides professional education and operates national registries for the measurement and improvement of quality care. More information about the association is available online at www.acc.org.

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