



March 13, 2025

Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
US Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20407

Dear Secretary Kennedy Jr.,

The Health IT End-Users Alliance (HITEU Alliance) is contacting you to bring to your attention the important work of the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy/Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ASTP/ONC) and to highlight how allowing ASTP/ONC to remain a staff division under the Office of the Secretary best positions it to participate in cross-governmental activities to solve the chronic disease epidemic.

The HITEU Alliance brings together health information professionals, physicians, hospitals, and other front-line healthcare providers and organizations that use health IT in the provision of care to ensure that policy and standards development activities reflect the complex web of clinical and operational challenges facing those who use technology tools for care. By working collaboratively across settings of care, the Health IT End-Users Alliance is focused on priorities for how technology can best support clinical care and operations.

In its two decades of existence, ASTP/ONC has successfully implemented programs to promote the interoperability of patient health data, created avenues for end-users to participate in the standards development process, and pursued new avenues to reduce administrative burden on end-users while improving the ability for providers and payers to collaborate. These programs are crucial to end-users as health information is more important than ever in coordinating patient care to improve care outcomes. End-users are often left out of the conversation when new technology is developed despite being the ones who use the technology the most. This leads to technology products being unable to achieve the policy goals they were created to meet. It is through ASTP/ONC's work that these challenges are overcome and end-users are offered an opportunity to have a seat at the table for these crucial conversations. The health IT products used in healthcare today are more effective and efficient specifically because of ASTP/ONC's work.

ASTP/ONC's ability to accomplish the above work and bring a broad range of stakeholders to the table for these important discussions is a benefit of it operating as a staff division within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As a staff division, it has the ability to collaborate across government and is able to ensure the data standards developed and implemented support patient outcomes but also advance interoperability in a variety of care settings. As you and your team work to address the chronic disease epidemic, ensuring the safe and secure flow of accurate, timely, high-quality health data will be paramount.

We welcome the opportunity to share with you and your staff more about the value of ASTP/ONC from the end-user perspective. Please contact American Healthcare Information Management Association (AHIMA) Senior Director of Regulatory and International Affairs, Andrew Tomlinson, at Andrew.tomlinson@ahima.org if you would like to discuss our letter further. We look forward to collaborating with you and your team on issues such as this one during your tenure.