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## **HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH CARE REFORM MUST BE WELL-ALIGNED TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND LOWER COSTS**

*Markle Foundation, Center for American Progress, and Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings Frame Vision for Information-Driven Health Care*

*Group Urges Public, Broad-Based Commitment to Specific Goals*

WASHINGTON, DC (July 15, 2009) — Dramatic improvements in health and reductions in cost growth are achievable if efforts to boost health information technology (IT) are aligned with broader health care reform, a group of three influential non-profit organizations said today.

Committing to specific, ambitious targets—like preventing 1 million heart attacks and strokes and cutting medication errors and administrative burdens in half—will allow health IT investments and health care reform to be directed toward results that will benefit the American public for generations, according to the Markle Foundation, the Center for American Progress, and the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings.

The three organizations today hosted a forum of industry and policy leaders on the need for health IT investments under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) that support a broader transformation to improve health outcomes and reduce health care cost growth.

"Health reform and health IT investments will protect all Americans only if we set concrete health improvement targets and identify the specific costs to be controlled," said Markle President Zoë Baird. "We know how to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes and how to slash the time physicians spend on administrative tasks. Let's set these goals and others like them. This is the only way we can expand coverage, improve outcomes, and control costs."

"We must take concrete steps now toward a health care system that pays for better quality and lower costs, rather than the unsustainable status quo of paying primarily for volume of medical services," said Mark McClellan, MD, PhD, Director of the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform and Leonard D. Schaeffer Chair in Health Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution. "By tying support for health IT directly to achieving these quality and cost improvements, the new health IT payments can be a critical step toward achieving this vision."

The group urged public- and private-sector leaders to embrace the 2015 health care improvement goals presented last month by an advisory committee of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC). The goals include preventing 1 million heart attacks and strokes; cutting rates of medication errors, preventable

hospitalizations, and racial/ethnic disparities in diabetes control in half; and providing patients with easy access to their own health information. The group proposes adding two 2015 goals to specifically address growth in health care costs: identifying duplicative health care services and reducing them by 50 percent, and halving the time spent by physicians on administrative tasks.

“These goals are ambitious but achievable if we implement health IT and health reform effectively,” said Todd Park, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress. “Top public- and private-sector leadership should firmly embrace these goals and facilitate their realization through communications to their own organizations and the American public. We should commit to the achievement of these goals as we dive into the details of policy formulation and execution.”

The three organizations have submitted a [collaborative comment](#) on behalf of a broad range of groups urging HHS to structure the criteria for ARRA’s health IT subsidies to doctors and hospitals in a way that is most likely to achieve these key 2015 goals.

“Success will be measured in the number of lives saved, the quality of health improved, and unnecessary costs controlled,” said Carol Diamond, MD, MPH, Managing Director at Markle. “The health IT investments and privacy protections in the Recovery Act are critical. Broader health care reform must build on these efforts by placing value on better outcomes, slowing growth of health care costs, and protecting privacy.”

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***The Markle Foundation** works to realize the full potential of information and information technology to address critical public needs, particularly in the areas of health and national security. Markle collaborates with innovators and thought leaders from the public and private sectors whose expertise lies in the areas of information technology, privacy, civil liberties, health, and national security. The Markle Health Program is committed to accelerating the ability of patients and consumers to use information technology to improve their health and health care, while protecting patient privacy.*

***The Center for American Progress** is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values. We work to find progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international problems and develop policy proposals that foster a government that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."*

***The Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings** is committed to producing innovative solutions that will drive reform of our nation’s health care system. The Center’s mission is to develop data-driven, practical policy solutions that promote broad access to high-quality, affordable, and innovative care in the United States. The Center conducts research, makes policy recommendations, and facilitates the development of new consensus around key issues and provides technical support to implement and evaluate new solutions in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders.*

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