

January 5, 2016

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
U.S. Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Senators Cassidy and Whitehouse:

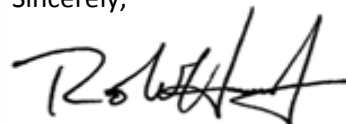
The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) is pleased to offer its support for S. 2141, the *Transparent Ratings on Usability and Security to Transform Information Technology Act of 2015* (TRUST IT Act). This is critical legislation that begins to address many of the shortcomings in the current health information technology (IT) marketplace.

SHM represents the nation's nearly 50,000 hospitalists, who are front-line clinicians in America's acute care hospitals. In this role, hospitalists have many years of experience as end users of electronic health records (EHRs) in their facilities. They are intimately familiar with the challenges presented by current systems and have significant concerns about the impact on patient safety and quality of care. The lack of interoperability between EHR systems and scarcity of shared information creates significant barriers towards efficient and effective use of this technology.

Information blocking is a major impediment to sharing best-practices between sites and forces hospitals around the country to expend significant resources on developing their own dashboards, workflows, and clinical decision support tools. This redundant effort is wasting healthcare resources. This legislation should curtail this problematic behavior by requiring vendors to attest that they do not block information sharing, and enforcing the prohibition through fines. Improved information sharing will allow informed decision making when purchasing EHRs and improve provider's ability to address unsafe errors or gaps within systems.

Use of health IT presents significant opportunity for our Nation's healthcare system. However, shortcomings still need to be addressed. The TRUST IT Act aims to ensure EHRs are secure, interoperable, and usable – the foundations that are needed to positively integrate information technology into the health care system. SHM appreciates your leadership and commitment to addressing problems with health IT. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Robert Harrington, Jr., MD, SFHM
President, Society of Hospital Medicine