PLEDGE

The American Hospital Association shares the principle that to achieve open, connected care for our communities, we all have the responsibility to take action. To further these goals, we commit to the following principles to advance interoperability among health information systems enabling free movement of data, which are foundational to the success of delivery system reform.

1. **Consumer Access:** To help consumers easily and securely access their electronic health information, direct it to any desired location, learn how their information can be shared and used, and be assured that this information will be effectively and safely used to benefit their health and that of their community.

2. **No Blocking/Transparency**: To help providers share individuals' health information for care with other providers and their patients whenever permitted by law, and not block electronic health information (defined as knowingly and unreasonably interfering with information sharing).

3. **Standards**: Implement federally recognized, national interoperability standards, policies, guidance, and practices for electronic health information, and adopt best practices including those related to privacy and security.

The American Hospital Association (AHA) strongly supports the creation of an efficient and effective infrastructure for health information exchange that facilitates the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care across health care settings. America's hospitals and health systems are actively engaged in building their information technology systems and view information exchange as vital to care improvement and consumer engagement, as well as to successful implementation of new models of care.

Hospitals and health systems have made great strides in implementing EHRs and establishing online tools for consumers to access their health information. Indeed, the most recent AHA survey data shows that 75 percent of hospitals had at least a basic EHR in place by 2014 – almost five times the share in 2010. Furthermore, in 2013, only 10.4 percent of hospitals had established ways for consumers to access their health information, but by 2014, 64.3 percent had done so. That is more than a six-fold increase in one year, with additional gains expected in 2015 and 2016.[1] To make this progress, hospitals collectively invested hundreds of billions of dollars in their information systems between 2010 and 2014.

Despite the shared goal of having health information follow patients for care, challenges remain. Hospitals and health systems report that many electronic health records do not easily share information, they do not universally have access to efficient exchange networks and other infrastructure, and the cost and complexity of the many interfaces needed to connect systems

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[1] Adler-Milstein, et al. Electronic Health Record Adoption In US Hospitals: Progress Continues, But Challenges Persist. *Health Affairs.* Nov 2015.

today are simply not sustainable. All providers also must work within the constraints of existing state and federal privacy rules.

Achieving the vision of health information that can be easily shared to inform care, engage patients and support new models of care will take hard work on the part of every actor. Through collaborative efforts focused on the highest priority actions, however, progress can be made. The AHA looks forward to working together with other private and public sector stakeholders to address these challenges.