

2008 Joint Meeting of the HIT Steering Committee and Stakeholder Work Groups – Brief Update on Federal HIT/Telehealth Legislation

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Brief Update on Federal HIT/Telehealth Legislation

- **Senator Conrad: HIT/Telehealth Advocate**
- **Some Policy Considerations**
- **Numerous Players involved in HIT/Telehealth Policy**
- **110th Congress Legislation**
- **Key Contacts and Wrap Up**

Senator Conrad: HIT/Telehealth Advocate

- In 1993, Senator Conrad formed the Capitol Hill Steering Committee on Telehealth and Healthcare Informatics.
- The Steering Committee's Honorary Bipartisan Leadership works with the *"House 21st Century Health Care Caucus."*
- The Steering Committee continues to convene a series of briefings on expanding the use of Telehealth. Senator Conrad uses the information gathered to inform the Senate's legislative agenda on Telehealth.

Capitol Hill Steering Committee on Telehealth and Healthcare Informatics - Draft 2008 Sessions and Sponsors

Below are examples of the 2008 sessions the Committee has held or plans to hold:

- "Training an HIT-Enabled Healthcare Workforce: Addressing Shortages"
- Special Session in Collaboration with The American Heart Association / American Stroke Association. "Innovative Uses of Telehealth in the Treatment of Acute Stroke"
- "Moving Toward an E-Enabled Healthcare Environment: Telehealth, EMR, PHR, eRX, and Related Technology Tools from 30,000 Feet – Update and Status"
- "Health Information Technology All-day Technology Showcase, and e-Health Panel Discussion"
- "Leading Local, Statewide, and Regional HIT Initiatives: Governors, Legislatures and Organizations Step Up to the Plate"

Senator Conrad: HIT/Telehealth Advocate

- Senator Conrad believes this technology has the potential to improve the quality of care and reduce health care costs.
- Given his focus on this issue, Senator Conrad hosted North Dakota's first Health IT Summit in April 2006.
- In 2007 and 2008, he has continued to work with the North Dakota Health IT Steering Committee, which was founded after his Health IT Summit, to expand the use of electronic medical records in North Dakota.

Senator Conrad: HIT/Telehealth Advocate

- As Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, Senator Conrad held a hearing on HIT on February 14, 2008. (You can watch the hearing online in streaming video at <http://budget.senate.gov/democratic/hearingstate.html>)
- In his opening remarks, Senator Conrad identified "the widespread adoption of health care information technology" as a top priority in health care reform.

Some Policy Considerations

- **Reimbursement & Capital Costs**
 - Aligning Financial Incentives
 - Driving Cost-Effectiveness (i.e. Chronic Care and Disease Management)
 - Start-up Costs Capital Investment
- **Standards (Clinical & Communications)**
 - Quality & Safety
- **Infrastructure**
 - Network Infrastructure / Broadband Access / Interoperability
- **The Human Dimension**
 - Arrangements to Practice in an e-enabled Environment
 - Practitioner and Patient Acceptance
 - Licensure, Accreditation, Certification
 - Legal (i.e. Liability and HIPAA)
 - Training an HIT Workforce

Numerous Players Involved in HIT/ Telehealth Policy

- **Federal Government**
 - Congress: Capitol Hill Steering Committee on Telehealth and Healthcare Informatics
 - Federal Legislation introduced by Congress (next slide)
 - Agencies (such as the DHHS, Ag, DoD, VA, IHS, NASA)
- **States**
 - Statewide Initiatives (Governors, Legislatures, Regional Networks)
 - According to HIMSS - 2008 Session – Almost all states have introduced legislation (over 150 bills) that addresses an aspect of HIT, such as public health informatics, e-Prescribing, privacy, and standards.
- **Private Sector**
 - Coalitions / Consortia / Organizations (such as ATA, HIMSS, eHI, AHIMA, AMIA, NAHIT, Health IT Now! Coalition)
 - Foundations (Markle, RWJ, Commonwealth, eHI Fndt)
- **Think about the Presidential Campaigns and Health Care Reform Debate** - No matter who wins the White House and Control of Congress in November, health reform legislation will likely be a front-burner issue for both the House and Senate in 2009.

110th Congress Legislation

- **Senator Conrad's Medicare Telehealth Improvement Act of 2008 (S. 2812)** – Status: 4/3/2008 Referred to the Committee on Finance, of which Senator Conrad is a senior member (see <http://www.americantelemed.org/> and handout)
- **Representative Pomeroy's Long Term Care Quality and Modernization Act (H.R. 4082)** – Would include skilled nursing facilities as originating sites for telehealth services under Medicare - Status: 11/6/2007 Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means
- **Representative Mike Thompson's Medicare Telehealth Enhancement Act of 2008 (H.R. 6163)** – Status: 5/22/2008 Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means (see handout)
- **See last handout regarding a variety of bills - (<http://www.thomas.gov/>)**

Key Contacts and Wrap Up

- Senator Kent Conrad's Office – Dana Halvorson and Lindsey Henjum (see business cards)
- Neal Neuberger – President of Health Tech Strategies and organizer of the Capitol Hill Steering Committee on Telehealth and Healthcare Informatics –
(703) 508-8182 (C) or nealn@hlthtech.com
- Again, for an updated status on Federal HIT/Telehealth bills go to: <http://www.thomas.gov/>