

MARKLE FOUNDATION

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Markle Foundation Congratulates Congress, Administration on Health Care IT Investments

Funding is a major first step; strategic implementation is critical

New York – The Markle Foundation today congratulated the Obama Administration and Congress for their historic investments in health IT with the passage of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The group emphasizes that now the key is strategic implementation of health care IT to ensure improved health care outcomes and protect patient privacy so we don't waste this important investment.

The Markle Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to realizing the full potential of information technology to address critical public needs, particularly in the areas of health care and national security.

"Everyone recognizes the importance of investments in health care information technology," said Zoë Baird, president of the Markle Foundation. "But not everyone realizes that it's about more than just digitizing records," Baird said. "We need the information to move efficiently so patients get the best possible care as they go from doctor to doctor, and we need to enforce the privacy protections so that everyone trusts the system."

The Recovery Act contains \$19 billion in investments for health care IT, along with new provisions to protect privacy. The majority of the money will be available as incentives to providers who make good use of new technologies.

"The money has been allocated, and now we must not waste it," Baird said. "Let's focus it on specific health improvements. Let's make sure it supports the connectivity of records. And let's do it in a way that benefits from open competition for standards and innovations, much like we've seen on the Internet."

The Markle Connecting for Health Initiative is a public-private collaborative with representatives from more than 100 organizations across the spectrum of health care. Its purpose is to catalyze the widespread changes necessary to realize the full benefits of health care IT, while protecting patient privacy and the security of personal health information.

"We know what it takes to get health IT right and do it in a way that protects patient privacy, because we have seen it done", said Dr. Carol Diamond, Managing Director at the Markle Foundation and Chair of the Markle Connecting for Health Initiative. "This is something that can be done, and must be done, to improve health and save money over the long term."

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