Preamble from HITOC
Oregon's Strategic Plan for Health IT

Health information technology (HIT) lives at the intersection of two worlds of great complexity: computer technology and the sprawling labyrinth that is the U.S. health care system. Still, health IT's purpose can be stated simply: To digitize Americans' health information and share it safely and securely, thereby helping medical providers offer better-organized and safer care through access to timely and accurate records that span the full continuum of care.

The full realization of health IT's promise is vital to the economic and health futures of Oregonians—the health care system needs to be more efficient and transparent, and medical providers need help to get the right care to patients, at the right time and in the right care setting. Through this strategic plan, Oregon's Health Information Technology Oversight Council sets out its aspirations for the next several years to support the groundbreaking health system transformation work underway in Oregon with a strong infrastructure of health IT.

HITOC's greatest motivation in devising this plan is to improve the health of Oregonians. To that end, this plan supports IT's potential to help providers better track their patients' health and to share information with other providers and with patients themselves. And on a higher level, the data collected in electronic health record systems can be combined with information from other health care providers and used to measure and improve the health of large groups of people, and to learn more about the most effective ways to deliver health care.

HITOC is also interested in the economic aspects of health IT, such as creating an environment in Oregon that is conducive to continued innovation in both the technology and health care sectors. We want to make Oregon a place that continues to draw federal dollars aimed at states that are leading the way toward a reformed health care system.

The Oregon Health Authority is taking an active role in supporting these advancements, and this document is aligned with OHA's Action Plan for Health, spearheaded by the Oregon Health Policy Board. At the same time, innovation in health IT is germinating in both the public and private sectors. HITOC recognizes its role as a convener, promoting an open environment among all innovators, whether government, nonprofit or private. This networking is vital to maintaining critical momentum for changes that need to happen on a rapid timetable.

Oregon enjoys a public culture of inclusion and innovation. Advancements in health care reform have been taking place in Oregon for decades, and with its Health System Transformation initiative and Coordinated Care Organization structure, Oregon has again established the state as a leader in developing strategies to use health care resources wisely and well, with the ultimate goal of a healthier populace.

HITOC presents this strategic plan in a spirit of both optimism and pragmatism; we have accomplished much over the past three years, but also recognize that some of the goals within this document have been difficult to reach. We recognize the challenges, and offer here specific steps that will move us toward our strategic goals. We also welcome to this journey newcomers to health IT, with whom we are pleased to share our vision of a healthier Oregon.