September 6, 2012

Mr. James T. Johnston
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Mr. Johnston,

I am writing to express the support of the Health Information Technology Oversight Council (HITOC) for Oregon's health care transformation efforts and its State Innovation Model Testing (SIM) proposal.

I am the chair of the HITOC and am speaking on behalf of the entire council when I express our strong backing for this proposal, which takes advantage of leading-edge health system innovation already taking place in our state. HITOC members are appointed by Oregon's Governor and confirmed by its Senate to guide health information technology policy in this state. As Oregon carries out an innovative health system transformation initiative through its approved Medicaid 1115 Waiver demonstration, HITOC wants to ensure that health IT is used to its fullest potential to improve health care coordination and quality.

Oregon's SIM proposal tests the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) model currently being implemented in the state, focusing on the presumed value gained through the flexibility created for local communities to institute payment and delivery system reform to meet the health care needs of their populations more effectively and at less cost.
The proposed Oregon Innovation Center will test delivery system and payment innovations for Medicaid/CHIP and additional payers and populations and will disseminate effective strategies via learning collaboratives, technical assistance, and "innovator agents." The Center will also provide infrastructure supports to ensure that information sharing mechanisms are in place to support implementation and that the data or analytic tools necessary for thorough testing of the CCO model and related innovations are readily available. Identification and dissemination of best practices in delivery system and payment reforms in Medicaid and a significant portion of the Medicare and commercial populations will create a "tipping point" for transformation of Oregon's delivery system. This transformation would ensure real and sustainable improvements in health status, enhanced patient experience and lower costs.

HITOC, in its efforts to further the most effective use of health IT in Oregon, has recognized the potential for data analysis and electronic health information sharing to provide those within the system with long-awaited insights into the most effective delivery of care, and to provide health consumers with information they can use to make care choices and improve their own health. It is not enough, we believe, to purchase and install hardware and software; the people involved must use those tools and resulting data to make the system better. It is through projects such as the State Innovation Models Initiative that we will gain this understanding.

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We look forward to working with the Oregon Health Authority, the new Innovation Center, Oregon's emerging CCOs and its many stakeholders to implement delivery systems and payment reforms in the state. We support the goals of Oregon's Health System Transformation effort: to improve health outcomes and quality of care while reducing costs in our health care system.

Sincerely,

Steve Gordon, HITOC chair
On behalf of the
Oregon Health Information Technology Oversight Council

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