

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

HIT Policy Panel Outlines Agenda, Creates Work Groups

In its first meeting, the Health IT Policy Committee advised the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT to make defining 'meaningful use,' health IT certification and health information exchange top priorities so ONC can meet the deadline of carrying out the health IT provisions included in the economic stimulus package, *Government Health IT* reports.

The federal stimulus package called for the creation of Health IT Policy and the Health IT Standards committees to advise ONC.

The Health IT Policy Committee also recommended that the Health IT Standards Committee begin to determine what standards will be needed in priority policy areas and how its work should be sequenced. T

National Coordinator for Health IT David Blumenthal, chair of the Policy committee, said that HHS must define meaningful use and create interim standards to support a rulemaking process by the end of the calendar year.

He added that ONC must release by May 18 its plan for creating a training system to help health care providers learn how to use electronic health records, which he said is an important part of meaningful use. Health care providers must demonstrate meaningful use of EHRs to qualify for increased Medicare and Medicaid payments.

At the meeting, Blumenthal said the committee will add work groups to expand on the details of each of the committee's priority areas. Members of the work groups were not determined, but Blumenthal asked Policy Committee members to volunteer for the work groups. He added that policy members should expect to be called soon about at least a teleconference to bring those groups together.