

The Connected Health Initiative (CHI) is the leading cross-sector group of innovators and healthcare organizations that harness the power of mobile connectivity to improve patient engagement and health outcomes. CHI members include a diverse array of healthcare stakeholders, including physician groups, patient groups, device manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, software companies, venture capital firms, and research universities. Digital medicine must play a more substantial role in healthcare as the current physician shortage of 30,000 increases to an estimated 90,000 by 2025. And by 2030, there will be an estimated 70 million Americans over the age of 65, about 80 percent of whom will have a chronic condition. In order to meet Americans' evolving healthcare needs, it is critical to extend each physician's reach to a larger population through the use of connected health technologies.



CHI focuses on the intersection of technology, government, and care to create a better environment for innovation in this rapidly-evolving sector. Mobile health services provide incredible opportunities for consumers to track their fitness, patients to monitor their health, and medical professionals to utilize patient data. As more connected health innovations enter the marketplace, patient outcomes and consumer wellness will continue to improve, but only if federal policies allow them to do so.

Government agencies are not keeping pace with innovation. This is especially glaring in the mobile health environment where requirements written for a desktop-driven age do not correspond to the connected ecosystem. Last year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) spent \$1 trillion on healthcare but reimbursed just \$28 million for telehealth. The bureaucracy is failing patients—preventing them from getting care when, how, and where, they need it.

CHI offers a crucial voice at the intersection of the healthcare and tech sectors, with a focus on the following key points:

- **Security and Privacy:** CHI advocates on the security and privacy concerns facing wellness and medical internet of things (IoT) applications and products.
- **Reimbursement:** CHI is the leading voice on the need for legal and policy changes that will enable clinicians to be reimbursed for the adoption and use of connected health innovations.
- **Interoperability:** CHI drives efforts to promote interoperability across the health information ecosystem, from providers to developers.

- Artificial/Augmented Intelligence (AI): CHI encourages policymakers to provide a framework of healthcare AI policy principles that address the range of opportunities and challenges associated with AI in healthcare and advocate for the appropriate role of government regulation.

To support interoperability, reimbursement, security, and privacy in the digital health space, CHI urges Congress to:

- Reintroduce and pass the sections of the **CONNECT for Health Act (S. 2484 / H.R. 4442 115th)** that were not enacted last year and any other legislation to advance the use of remote monitoring technology and telehealth across the American healthcare landscape through reimbursement reforms.
- Make appropriate updates to regulatory vestiges—like features of the Anti-Kickback Statute and the Stark Law—intended to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse that can occur under fee-for-service practices.
- Peel away the overly burdensome restrictions on telehealth under 1834(m) of the Social Security Act and consider requiring the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to look beyond the 10-year budget window, including by passing the **Preventive Health Savings Act (H.R. 2953 / S. 2164 115th)**.
- Work with CHI to understand the impact and potential of cutting-edge technologies and innovations on the healthcare industry (e.g., machine learning/artificial intelligence).
- Provide critical oversight of U.S. federal agencies in their efforts to make much-needed health data interoperability a reality while ensuring privacy protections remain strong in the digital health ecosystem.
- Support access to broadband, especially in rural areas—including using unlicensed spectrum such as television white spaces—to enable connected health technologies to reach rural populations that suffer from high rates of chronic disease.
- Pass legislation like the **Wearable Equipment Adoption and Reinforcement and Investment in Technology (WEAR IT) Act** to ensure that taxpayers can use their flexible or health savings accounts (FSAs/HSAs) to purchase wearables and connected health software apps and platforms. Currently, HSAs and FSAs cover individual devices such as blood glucose monitors, but they do not cover a wearable device that collects blood glucose data via a sensor and an app and is also capable of capturing an EKG reading. Multi-function devices and their associated software components are better suited for consumers who want to track more than one health-related variable, and there is no reason these items should not benefit from the same tax advantages as single-function devices.