**Consumer Partnership for e-Health (CPeH) Statement to the National Committee for Vital and Health Statistics**
**Leveraging HIT to Support Meaningful Consumer Engagement and Improved Health**

The Consumer Partnership for e-Health (CPeH) is a coalition of over thirty consumer, patient and labor organizations that, since 2005, has served as a strong and diverse consumer voice advocating for patient- and consumer-centric policies related to health information technology (HIT).

Our approach is guided in part by a set of consensus-based consumer principles for HIT, based on the Markle Foundation's *Common Framework,* which have been adopted by a variety of national, state and local patient and consumer groups, and used in a number of local HIT implementation efforts.

While numerous stakeholders will help shape the definition of "meaningful use," CPeH is proud to provide input based uniquely on the interests of consumer and patient groups, absent any other agendas or stakeholder self-interest.

At its core, "meaningful use" is really about improving the health and health outcomes of patients. We believe that success at improving patient outcomes through HIT requires a fundamental shift from a system designed around the needs of providers and payers to one that puts the patient's needs and interests at the center. In spite of extremely talented professionals putting forth extraordinary efforts, the results we currently reap from our health care system include countless examples of patient harm, wide variation in the quality and experience of care patients receive (both among minority and underserved populations and across different geographic areas), tremendous disease burden resulting from chronic illness and disability, and excessive waste, which contributes to the unacceptable percentage of individuals who simply have no access to the high quality health care they both need and deserve.[1] A key factor in the persistence of these major challenges to truly patient-centered care is the lack of information available to those who need it, when they need it, in a form that is meaningful and actionable to them.

As a coalition representing a wide range of patients and consumers, we set forth below a vision for how truly patient-centered health and health care can be achieved through the effective use of information, enabled by technology.

## THE VISION

A fully patient-centered health care system will exhibit the following characteristics, all of which must be enabled and supported by the effective, meaningful use of HIT to improve patient outcomes:

- *Care is comprehensive, coordinated, personalized and planned*

[1] National Priorities Partnership. *National Priorities and Goals: Aligning Our Efforts to Transform America's Healthcare.* Washington, DC: National Quality Forum; 2008.

- *Patients and their caregivers are full partners in their care, assisted with management of chronic illnesses and disability, as well as with health care decision making*
- *Transitions between settings of care are smooth, safe, effective and efficient*
- *Patients can get care when and where they need it*
- *Patients' experience of care is routinely assessed and improved*
- *Care is connected to and integrates community resources*
- *Continuous quality improvement and the elimination of disparities are a top priority*

Incentives must create a pathway toward this patient-centered system, beginning with rewarding the currently achievable goals such as effective medication management, improved coordination of care, and safer transitions between settings, while building steadily toward the achievement of every characteristic of the patient-centered system we all seek. Essential mileposts include:

- Increasingly ambitious health improvement aims over time.
- The ability of consumers, patients, and their families to access their personal health information, receive prompts and reminders, and use patient decision support without compromising the confidentiality of information.
- Flexible requirements that enable a broad range of providers and patients to benefit from new technologies.
- The ability of systems to capture both clinical and patient experience data to support more rigorous and robust quality measurement and improvement.

We believe strongly that HIT is an essential tool for creating the kind of patient-centered health care system that will truly support patients and their families. We look forward to working with you and with the Administration, to provide further input from the consumer perspective as the definition of "meaningful use" is further developed. If you have any questions about our vision for patient-centered care as enabled by HIT or about the CPeH, please contact Eva Powell at 202-986-2600 or epowell@nationalpartnership.org

Members of the Consumer Partnership for eHealth

AARP
The Center for Democracy and Technology
The Center for Information Therapy
The Center for Medical Consumers
Childbirth Connection
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
The Children's Partnership
Consumers Union
Health Care For All
Healthwise
Mental Health America
The National Association of People with AIDS
National Consumers League
The National Partnership for Women & Families