



Joint Oversight Hearing on Advanced Technologies in Health Care

*Submitted by: Alan Macdonald, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Roundtable
May 16, 2005*

Senator Moore, Representative Walrath, Senator Hart and Representative Bosley, please accept this testimony on behalf of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable (MBR) in lieu of my attendance at the May 5, 2005 Joint Oversight Hearing on Advanced Technologies in Healthcare. I regret that a scheduling conflict precluded my attending in person.

In 2002, MBR's Health Care Task Force released a white paper entitled "Solutions for Massachusetts Health Care" which focused – like your joint hearing – on improving health care delivery and reducing costs. One of the major themes of the paper is that consumers and providers need to take more ownership of health care spending. To accomplish this, MBR's Health Care Task Force recommends that employers sensitize employees to the cost of health care and the impact of their health care decisions, and that health plans design products that better align incentives for consumers to select cost-effective health care providers, settings and treatments.

Employers and health plans can not achieve these recommendations without leveraging technology resources. Technology allows consumers and providers to make informed decisions about their health care, and assists providers in delivering more efficient, high-quality care. MBR's paper cites the example of CareGroup Healthcare System which, after implementing computerized physician order entry (CPOE), saw the elimination of "90% of medication errors on just one floor." The paper concludes that "access to data about provider and plan performance and use of technology is a critical component to improving consumer awareness and decisions about their care."

With this theme guiding us, and recognizing its importance to achieving our shared goals, MBR has been an active participant in the e-health collaborative and will be updating our 2002 report later this year to examine additional uses for technology in accelerating transparency initiatives in the current marketplace. We will share those recommendations with you to help inform this legislative session's health care debate.

Thank you for your leadership in focusing on improving patient safety and reducing costs through the application of technology. Please contact us at any time if we can be of assistance during your deliberations.

