

August 5, 2005

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

We are very pleased to nominate David Lansky, Senior Director of the Health Program of the Markle Foundation, and Executive Director of the Personal Health Technology Initiative, for the consumer/privacy seat on the American Health Information Community (AHIC). We appreciate the opportunity to put forward this nomination, and your interest in public input. We believe that health information technology has the potential to improve health care for all Americans, and the consumer perspective is critical to its success.

The consumer/privacy seat on AHIC holds promise for more consumer and patient involvement in health care in the information age, and we believe that Dr. Lansky is the best choice to fill that role. As indicated by the number of organizations signing this letter, Dr. Lansky has the broad support of the consumer community.

Dr. Lansky served as the founding President & CEO of the Foundation for Accountability, Inc. (FACCT), a non-profit organization with a multi-stakeholder board made up of consumers and private and public purchasers of health care, in which many of our organizations participated. Over his ten years of leadership at FACCT, Dr. Lansky articulated many of the ideas that led to today's interest in consumer "report cards," outcomes measurement, pay-for-performance, and personal health records. He has worked to improve health and health care by making better information available to patients, physicians, hospitals, and health plans. While sensitive to the needs of all involved in our health care system, he has focused consistently on the importance of providing patients with more information about their own health and health care. As technology has evolved, Dr. Lansky has led efforts to have health care consumers benefit from new computer and internet-based technologies. He is fully committed to creating an interoperable health care system that will meet the needs of patients and consumers, as well as others.

As Senior Director of the Health Program of the Markle Foundation, Dr. Lansky currently directs projects related to the role of personal health records within an interoperable health information-sharing environment. He has chaired two national working groups on Personal Health Records, and now leads the Markle Foundation's Personal Health Technology Initiative, which focuses on the policy challenges associated with emerging consumer health technologies, and is organizing a major conference for consumers in Washington, DC this October in cooperation with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Dr. Lansky also plays a key role in the Markle Foundation's Connecting for Health collaborative, ensuring that the emerging nationwide health information network is designed to address public concerns about the privacy and security of personal health information, and will include ample opportunities for consumers to use personal health records to direct their own care. Dr. Lansky is currently advising HHS and CMS

on their strategies to deploy personal health records. He has testified frequently before the National Committee for Vital and Health Statistics, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor ERISA Advisory Committee, the Institute of Medicine, and the Congress, and his counsel is often sought by Senate and House staff from both parties on key committees on issues related to interoperable health care.

We regard Dr. Lansky as a thoughtful and effective advocate for expanding consumers' roles in their own health care – and as someone who advances these ideals through collaborative, positive relationships. He has championed patient and family needs before medical societies, employers, technology companies, and policy think tanks. Dr. Lansky would make a highly constructive contribution to the AHIC's deliberations, especially as they pertain to consumers' desires to participate more fully in their own health care while preserving their privacy. It would be our intention to work closely with Dr. Lansky to remain informed and involved in the issues before AHIC.

Based on his record, as well as his cooperative approach to working with multiple organizations to achieve results, we enthusiastically recommend Dr. Lansky for the consumer/privacy seat on the AHIC. We look forward to working with you to ensure that health information technology improves the quality of health care for every American.

Sincerely,



Debra L. Ness
President
National Partnership for Women & Families



John Rother
Director of Policy and Strategy
AARP



Gene Kimmelman
Director, Washington Office,
Co-Director of Advocacy
Consumers Union



Gerry Shea
Assistant to the President for Government
Affairs
AFL-CIO



Linda Golodner
President/CEO
National Consumers League



Marina Weiss
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and
Government Affairs
March of Dimes



Arthur Aaron Levin, MPH
Director
Center for Medical Consumers



Brian W. Lindberg
Executive Director
Consumer Coalition for Quality Health Care



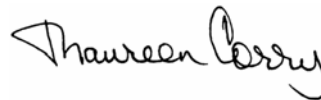
Peter Van Etten
President and CEO
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
International



Ellen Stovall
President and CEO
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship



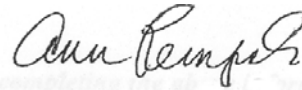
Naomi Naierman
President and CEO
American Hospice Foundation



Maureen Corry
Executive Director
Maternity Center Association



David Swankin
President
Citizen Advocacy Center



Ann Kempfski
Director of Health Systems Policy
Service Employees International Union



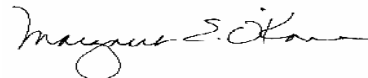
Michael Jacobson
Executive Director
Center for Science in the Public Interest



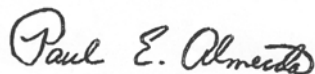
Jeff Bloom
Board of Directors
Title II Community AIDS National Network



Diane L. James, CAE
Executive Director
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health



Margaret O'Kane
President
NCQA



Paul E. Almeida,
President, Department for Professional
Employees
AFL-CIO

MARKLE FOUNDATION

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The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

I am pleased to express my appreciation and support of the nomination of David Lansky by a number of major consumer organizations to serve on the American Health Information Community (AHIC). As you are aware, Dr. Lansky is Senior Director of the Markle Foundation's Health Program, and is Executive Director of our Personal Health Technology Initiative. Over his long career, he has been instrumental in engaging numerous patient and consumer organizations in the continuing challenges of measuring, reporting, and improving the quality of our health care system. He is now leading Markle's collaboration with a broad range of consumer and privacy organizations to engage consumers in using health IT to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of their health care. We are pleased that so many national organizations place their confidence in David and in Markle's ability to represent their shared concerns in the AHIC process.

As you know, the Markle Foundation identifies and acts on the public policy and technology challenges that accompany the introduction of new information technologies. We believe that these challenges are best addressed through candid and serious discussion among various stakeholder groups – and that active participation by consumers and the general public is vital. Particularly in the health arena, where individual concerns about protecting personal health information are so acute, we believe that active involvement of patients, families, and consumers is essential. Over the past several years, Dr. Lansky has been instrumental in opening and sustaining national discussion about these issues with many of our nation's most influential consumer organizations. These relationships have enriched our own work and will, I am sure, bring fresh thinking and broad public support to the work of AHIC.

We at Markle would be honored to support Dr. Lansky's participation on the AHIC. You know, Mr. Secretary, that we enthusiastically support your efforts to advance the role of IT in our health care system and will be pleased to assist you in any appropriate way. Thank you for your leadership in this critical area.

Sincerely,



Zoe Baird
President