

## HIT Chapter Update: 5/2010 by Dr. Kristin Benson

There are several exciting developments in “Health Information Technology” (HIT) at the national level of our AAP. I hope you will maintain and renew your interest in sharing expertise and experiences with the burgeoning HIT industry and our role as pediatricians. As a group, medicine is still way behind in HIT, and it is time we start catching up!

The “Council on Clinical Information Technology” (COCIT), continues its activities with a committed group of staff and physicians. I am rotating off the COCIT Executive Committee in June 2010, after an exciting and interesting run of 6 years on that committee. In this role, I have learned a great deal from colleagues from all over the country and excellent staff, been involved with standards, certification, and policy issues, traveled, and read thousands of e-mails! As the COCIT Education Chair, I helped plan the COCIT-sponsored talks at the 2009, 2010, and 2011 National Conference and Exhibitions (NCE’s). I was able to represent the AAP at several meetings of the E-Health Initiative in Washington D.C., learning first hand how public and private groups have collaborated to move HIT forward. We welcome any AAP members who would like to join COCIT. Members have access to an active listserve, a helpful website, a bi-annual newsletter, and a plethora of opportunities to participate actively at all levels.

Because the field of HIT is so far-reaching, the AAP this spring formed a new “Child Health Informatics Center” (CHIC) to more fully address issues around electronic health records and digital information exchange. The head of the center is Dr. Chris Lehmann, who has been active in COCIT and Health Informatics for many years. He practices at Johns Hopkins, is a leader in academic informatics, and has a broad understanding of the needs of clinicians. I am personally gratified to see a person like him step into the position, and have no doubt that the AAP will be playing an influential role in the national agenda.

Prior to this fall’s National Conference and Exhibition (NCE) in San Francisco, COCIT is sponsoring a “Pediatrics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Symposium” called “HIT and Quality: Promise and Perils” on Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. Dr. Blumenthal, who is the head of the Office of National Coordinator of Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) will be the keynote speaker. Also, there will be an array of talks sponsored by COCIT and other groups regarding HIT, and a “Pediatric Office of the Future” in the exhibit hall at the fall NCE.

As you may know, the federal government is providing monetary initiatives to providers who show “meaningful use” of electronic health records and provide Medicaid services starting in 2011. \$19 billion has been allocated for you (and your colleagues). Taking advantage of these incentives will help offset the cost of transitioning to EMR in your practice. Hopefully, private payers will follow suit and offer incentives as well. EMR is an inevitable requirement for practices in the near future, and you can still choose a carrot or a stick. Some practices may have to re-organize their business liaisons to accommodate HIT needs. See the attached summary list of “meaningful use” criteria.

Good luck, and feel free to contact me on issues around HIT!