



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

MAY 12 2006

Reed V. Tuckson, M.D.
Chair
Secretary's Advisory Committee on Genetics, Health, and Society
NIH Office of Biotechnology Activities
6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite 750
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Tuckson:

I am writing to thank the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Genetics, Health, and Society (SACGHS) for your letter calling attention to the importance of including standards for genetics/genomics and family history information in the development of the Nation's health information infrastructure. I recognize that the knowledge and technologies developed through genetic and genomic research has the potential to transform health care and that the Federal Government has a role in facilitating this transformation.

Electronic health records will be crucial for the appropriate integration of genetics/genomics into health care and the health care system and will facilitate the linkage of patient data with health services research infrastructure. The National Coordinator for Health Information Technology is carefully considering the appropriate tools and standards for the inclusion of genetics/genomics and family history information in electronic health records while maintaining the highest levels of privacy protections. I commend SACGHS for its attention to this important issue and appreciate the Committee's valuable advice and guidance in this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael O. Leavitt", is positioned above the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M".

Michael O. Leavitt