



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

DEC - 4 2008

Harry L. Reynolds, Jr.
Chairman, National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road, Room 2402
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) that summarizes NCVHS's comments related to the Department of Justice's (DOJ) proposed rule on the electronic prescribing of controlled substances. I appreciate NCVHS's continued efforts to provide the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with recommendations regarding this important topic.

As you know, electronic prescribing, and health information technology in general, are among my top priorities. Several offices within HHS, including the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology and the Office of E-Health Standards and Services, have been working with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) throughout this rulemaking process to provide input and express HHS's goals for electronic prescribing.

The comment period on the proposed rule ended September 25, 2008, and I expect that HHS will continue to work directly with DOJ and DEA to create a final rule that appropriately balances both of our priorities.

Sincerely,

Michael O. Leavitt