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PBGH Statement on Delay of Meaningful Use Implementation

The Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH) is deeply troubled by the recent proposal to further delay implementation of the Meaningful Use program, the next step in implementation of the electronic health record (EHR) incentive program. We urge the administration to stay the course with the current implementation schedule and to explore alternatives that will mitigate the challenges of later-than-expected certification of many EHR products.

Over \$22 billion in support from the federal government has already been spent to implement EHRs and electronic data exchange, and many physicians and hospitals are meeting the Meaningful Use standards. Other industries, however, have moved much more rapidly to adopt electronic systems without government subsidies or incentives; the health care industry has lagged far behind. It is time for health care leaders to step up and make the investments to modernize their systems and improve the quality and affordability of the care provided to patients.

Meaningful Use is inextricably tied to ongoing efforts to transform the health care delivery system to meet the Triple Aim's three goals of better outcomes, improved individual experiences of care, and reduced costs. An additional delay in building a robust electronic health information exchange will compromise efforts to achieve these goals. We see each stage in the Meaningful Use program as a crucial stepping stone toward addressing the incredibly fragmented system that consumers and purchasers face today, and improving not only care coordination and outcomes, but also patient safety and cost. The reductions in poor outcomes and readmissions to the hospital and emergency department will translate into improved quality and significant savings.

We urge policy-makers to continue to move rapidly toward implementing a program that will give patients and providers the tools to they need to improve our health care system.