

June 8, 2012



MacKenzie Robertson  
FACA Program Lead  
Office of the National Coordinator  
355 E Street, SW, Suite 310  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Mr. Robertson:

As President of the American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA), I am writing to urge that you appoint a representative of the laboratory industry as a Member to the Health Information Technology (HIT) Standards Committee. ACLA – which represents the leading national, regional, and local independent laboratories – recommends that Ken McCaslin, Director, HealthCare Standards, Quest Diagnostics Incorporated be appointed a member to the HIT Standards Committee.

Laboratory testing results influence an estimated 70% of all medical decisions, and, are an absolutely key part of the medical record. Laboratory data represent 60% of the electronic medical record. Laboratory data is also complex, voluminous, and laboratories, particularly independent laboratories, have invested extensive resources toward establishing electronic ordering and results reporting systems with physician offices. Laboratories also have extensive expertise and experience with the intricacies of establishing electronic links with thousands of physician offices. For these reasons, laboratories should be represented on the HIT Standards Committee.

ACLA and its member companies are fully engaged and taking a leadership role in establishing nationally uniform standards for the exchange of health care information, and laboratory information in particular. ACLA served on the Steering Committee of the EHR-Lab Interoperability and Connectivity Standards (ELINCS) project – an effort initiated at the behest of former Coordinator of ONC, Dr. David Brailer.

Ken McCaslin is well qualified to serve on the HIT Standards Committee. Mr. McCaslin has over 25 years experience in healthcare, specifically in the laboratory industry. He started with International Clinical Laboratory (ICL) Incorporated in 1982 installing laboratory systems in acquired companies. He eventually moved over to Hospital Laboratory Information Systems responsible for laboratory installations within partner hospitals. In 1988 ICL was purchased by SmithKline Beecham Clinical Laboratory (SBCL) and Ken became responsible for the Interface Implementation and Development Team including when Quest Diagnostics purchased SBCL in 1998.

In his current position he is the key person responsible for relationships to standards organizations and government initiatives. He has been a member of HL7 since 1990 and continues to hold key leadership roles. Ken is the founding Chair of ACLA's HIT

Committee. Ken was the principle author of ACLA's Test Compendium Framework an Implementation Guide for the electronic delivery of a Lab's Directory of Service (eDOS and at HL7 it is named HL7 Version 2 Implementation Guide: Laboratory Test Compendium Framework, Release 1). Ken is the co-chair of Standards and Interoperability Framework Initiatives (S&I Framework) Laboratory Results Interface Implementation Guide (LRI IG) Work Group and Laboratory Orders Interface Implementation Guide (LOI IG) Work Group.

Ken also serves as the liaison between HL7 and Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) another standards body in the laboratory space. He served on both work groups formed by California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF) to develop laboratory messages called ELINCS for results messages, one of the base IGs used for LRI IG and ELINCS Order Messages the base for LOI IG.

The issue of health information technology is an important one to ACLA and its membership as we believe the health care system will benefit immensely from the propagation of robust health IT. Implemented properly, IT will provide ready access to timely, relevant, reliable and secure information through an interconnected infrastructure affording better health through better health care.

Once again, thank you for your attention to this issue. If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to contact Alan Mertz at (202) 637-9466.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Mertz".

Alan Mertz  
President, ACLA