



September 22, 2015

The Honorable Jeffrey Sánchez  
House Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing  
State House  
Room 236  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Chairman Sánchez:

**The Massachusetts Osteopathic Society (MOS) is writing to strongly encourage you to support HB 1023.** This bill would delay from January 2017 to January 2022 the provision of the Health Care Cost Containment Act that requires all health care providers to fully implement the interoperable electronic health records (EHR) systems. The MOS believes that mandating the use of EHR can be financially burdensome and detract from time spent with patients, particularly for physicians in private practice and in medically underserved areas, and therefore are in favor of postponing the effective date for this requirement.

MOS is a professional organization that represents the over 900 DOs providing patient care in Massachusetts.

**While MOS applauds the goals of the Health Care Cost Containment Act to reign in unnecessary spending and provide care for a greater number of people, we believe that the mandatory EHR requirement may be counterproductive to these goals.** The \$40,000 up-front software installation cost and \$15,000 in annual maintenance for EHR, plus lost time with patients and increased staffing needed for data entry, have led some physicians to decline to accept new Medicare and Medicaid patients or seek hospital employment.<sup>1</sup> Private practice physicians who are otherwise willing and able to provide care in rural and underserved areas are particularly impacted by these requirements, and delaying their effective date will give providers more time to adapt and plan for the financial demands of EHR implementation.

The MOS believes that the mandatory EHR requirements may have a chilling effect particularly on small, private practitioners and on physicians who serve rural communities who may be unable to afford the high cost of the technology. We urge you to protect the ability of these physicians to continue to serve their patients by delaying EHR implementation through your **support of HB 1023**. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact MOS at [Massachusetts@osteopathic.org](mailto:Massachusetts@osteopathic.org) or call 800-621-1773, ext. 8188.

Sincerely,

William Foley, DO, MSc  
President, MOA

CC: MOS Board of Trustees

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<sup>1</sup> <http://thehealthcareblog.com/blog/2011/10/07/why-doctors-dont-like-electronic-health-records/>