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GOVERNOR CREATES ARIZONA HEALTH-E CONNECTION ROADMAP
Committee to Focus on Reducing Health Care Costs, Secure Exchange of Information

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano today announced she has created a new Health-e Connection Steering Committee. The move is in response to President Bush's April 12, 2004 call for widespread adoption of interoperable electronic health records within 10 years.

"Arizona's health care system already has much of the infrastructure in place to become digital," Governor Napolitano said. "Plus, the early adoption of an interoperable electronic health records system will improve the quality and reduce the cost of health care in Arizona.

"Doctors will have easy access to patients' medical records at all times, thus reducing the possibility of duplication or error."

The steering committee is charged with developing a road map for Arizona to achieve statewide electronic health data exchange between insurance companies, health care providers and consumers of health care.

Chris Cummiskey, director of the Government Information Technology Agency, and Beth Schermer, an attorney at Coppersmith Gordon Schermer Owens & Nelson who specializes in health care, are co-chairs of the steering committee. Starting Sept. 6, Schermer will be temporary vice dean for administration at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine Phoenix campus. She is taking a leave of absence from her law practice.

"CEOs and executive directors of health care associations, major employers, hospitals and other leaders of health care across the state will sit on the steering committee, ensuring the different entities involved in the Arizona health care system are working toward the same goal," said the Governor.

The federal government estimates $140 billion or almost 10 percent of the total yearly health spending in the United States could be eliminated by the expansion of health information technology.

The steering committee was created by executive order. A copy of the executive order and the list of invited steering committee members are attached.

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