Health care consumers want access to e-health technology - including the ability to communicate with their providers via email. In a recent Harris Interactive Poll (2012), 65% indicated interest in online communications with their provider; however, only 12% had email access to their providers. E-health, which includes email, has the potential to increase provider efficiency, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes. Several studies have shown that email communication improves access to care, is patient-centered, and strengthens the patient-physician relationship.

The full potential of e-health is limited by the cost of health information technology (HIT), reimbursement, state licensing requirements, and quality of care issues. In addition, both health care providers and patients have concerns about security and privacy of electronic communications. The following steps should be considered to increase access to e-health:

- **Reimbursement and cost**: Reform payment as the traditional fee-for-service programs will not support e-health. The MU incentive program designed to run through 2016 should be lengthened rather than assessing a penalty to providers who opt out.

- **Licensing**: 1) Establish uniform licensure rules and integration of licensure with national databases. 2) Do not single out telemedicine as it is not a medical specialty. 3) Maintain state control of licensing fees and disciplinary action/regulation.

- **E-health security**: Re-engineer HIPPA guidelines to address the growing amount of information that can be exchanged online. Adhere to the AMA/AMIA guidelines as best practice to ensure privacy and confidentiality.