

April 5, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, and members of the Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the undersigned organizations that work to protect our nation's critical infrastructure in health information technology. Each month, new security threats bombard communications networks around the globe, and the health care field continues to be a prime target. The health and livelihood of millions of Americans is at stake when the security of medical and financial records is compromised and healthcare operations are interrupted.

For this reason, we greatly appreciate the efforts driven by members of the U.S. House of Representatives to address the threats posed by the malicious use of robocalls and other telephone-calling methods to gain access to, and fraudulently use, sensitive data from consumers and businesses.

We wholeheartedly endorse two current bills – **HR 946, the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act**, sponsored by Energy and Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone, and **HR 721, the Spam Calls Task Force Act**, sponsored by Rep. Charlie Crist – as very important steps toward tackling this issue.

In our experience, robocalls and spam calls constitute a serious threat to patient care, in addition to disrupting business operations and facilitating financial fraud. In recent months some health care providers have been targeted by robocallers who contact a wide swath of the community, including many patients. In these instances, robocallers use “spoofed” numbers identical to the hospitals, in an effort to gain sensitive information. In addition to the threat on patient financial information, this practice can jeopardize the line of communication between doctors and patients by casting doubt on the integrity of calls coming from the hospital.

Some hospitals have also been victims of events where spam callers pose as agents of the Department of Justice and other credentialing authorities, questioning the licensing of physicians. While this effort was not successful in gaining significant amounts of sensitive information, it was highly disruptive to business operations. In one instance, more than 260 calls were made to one organization, taking up to 16.5 hours of staff time to respond to the calls.

By enacting strong consumer protections for authorized calls and empowering the FCC with strong enforcement tools to rein in robocallers and those with fraudulent intent, HR 946, the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act, could help curb these abusive practices. We also commend HR 721, the Spam Calls Task Force Act, which would establish an interagency working group to devise ways to address this threat through enforcement and regulation.

As organizations engaged in broad-based efforts to safeguard national security, economic security, and national public health, we offer our full support for these and other similar efforts to curb malicious robocalls and spam calls. Furthermore, we hope you will count us as a resource in formulating public policies to protect critical health care infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Moffitt Cancer Center (Florida)

Yale New Haven Health System (Connecticut)

Tampa General Hospital (Florida)

BayCare Health System (Florida)

Premise Health (Tennessee)

WellSpan Health (New York)

Genesis HealthCare System (Ohio)

College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (Michigan)

New Hanover Regional Medical Center (North Carolina)

Nicholas H. Noyes Memorial Hospital URMedicine/Noyes Health (New York)

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (New York)

Faith Regional Health Services (Nebraska)

Institute for Critical Infrastructure Technology (Washington, DC)

SAPNS2 (Pennsylvania)

APEX Digital Imaging (Florida)

Orlando Health (Florida)

Security Compliance Associates (Florida)

AmerisourceBergen Corporation (Pennsylvania)