



## **An Invitation to Participate in Developing a Certification Program for Personal Health Records**

If you are thinking about using a personal health record (PHR) to better manage personal health but aren't sure what you should look for, you may be asking questions such as these:

- With PHRs offered by physicians, health insurers or online providers, how do I begin to make a choice that is right for me or my family?
- Everyone is worrying about electronic data and privacy today, so how can I be sure that the PHR I choose has adequate security?
- Will I be able to share access to my personal health information with those I trust such as my doctor or an emergency department?

There is a program developing to help you answer these questions. The Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT®) is an officially "recognized certification body" in the US for health information technology – a private, nonprofit organization that is to electronic health information products what Underwriters Laboratories is to electrical products. The Commission applies standards, tests products, and awards a "seal of compliance" to health information products. If you buy an electrical product, you should expect to see the UL® seal. If you choose a health information product, you should look for the CCHIT certification seal.

The Certification Commission already certifies electronic health records used in doctor's offices and hospitals. The Commission will launch a new

program for personal health records in mid-2009 that will emphasize privacy, security and the information sharing capabilities of PHRs.

The Commission has completed its first step, the creation of draft criteria for testing PHRs. Beginning Monday, Sept. 29, the criteria will be posted to <http://cchit.org/participate/public-comment/> and available for a 30-day public comment period.

A new Web site and blog dedicated to furthering the conversation about PHRs, [www.phrdecisions.com](http://www.phrdecisions.com), will launch on that same date. A consumer's guide to certification of PHRs will also be available there.

On Friday, Oct. 10, the Certification Commission will host a special free Town Call teleconference that will allow consumers and consumer representatives to gain a better understanding of PHR certification and how they can play a role in the process. The Town Call will include a presentation by Dr. Mark Leavitt, chair of the Commission, and Dr. Jodi Pettit, the staff leader of the PHR Work Group. It can be downloaded by Oct. 9 at [www.phrdecisions.com](http://www.phrdecisions.com).

Participants in the Town Call can ask questions during the call or online at [www.phrdecisions.com](http://www.phrdecisions.com). The questions and answers will be posted online following the teleconference.

### **The dial-in information for the Town Call is:**

4:00 pm ET/ 3:00 pm CT/ 2:00 pm MT/ 1:00 pm PT

**Participant Dial-In Number: 1 (877) 313-5342**

**Conference ID Number: 65204557**