

**Senator Dan Sullivan**  
**Written Questions for the Record to**  
**Dr. Henderson**  
**“Advancing Telehealth through Connectivity”**  
**Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation**

**Question 1:** In Alaska, telehealth is hugely important, as it is the primary way many people in rural areas are able to receive healthcare. Some of our health facilities have reported interoperability problems with telehealth software and electronic health records (EHR) software. In addition to the problems caused by this lack of integration, we are also missing out on potential benefits of having fully integrated systems. Have you seen this interoperability problem in other areas of the country? If so, are there possible solutions to the problem?

**Answer:** Thank you, Senator Sullivan. You are correct. Healthcare providers across the country experience problems with EHR integration, and ensuring interoperability of the EHR platforms costs time and money. This inability for various EHR systems to interface is concerning, as providing the patient’s data when and where it is needed is crucial for enabling better care coordination and improved health outcomes.

In Mississippi, the state developed the Mississippi Health Information Network (MS-HIN) to deliver the interfacing solution across multiple EHR programs throughout the state. A public-private partnership established by House Bill 941 in the 2010 state legislature and funded by an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, the mission of MS-HIN is “to provide sustainable, trusted exchange of health information to improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care for all Mississippians.” Its vision is to be “the trusted source for secure, quality health care information – anywhere, anytime for a healthier Mississippi.”

MS-HIN integrates various EHR platforms among providers in the state, allowing for a secure and reliable exchange of health information. Statewide EHR interoperability is especially important for our work at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) – Center for Telehealth. Of our 166 distant telehealth sites across the state, the majority of these locations do not use the same EHR as UMMC. Consequently, we work with MS-HIN to help integrate the different medical record platforms for us, enabling this important data exchange to occur.

MS-HIN provides a streamlined and efficient approach and cost-effective strategy for EHR interoperability. As you explore the possibility of a national medical record system, Mississippi’s exchange could be a model worth replicating. Please contact me with further questions or for additional information.