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Partnering for Progress

Three national associations have signed an agreement to develop a joint clinical engineering/IT (CEIT) community to develop guidance documents, share best practices, and promote an understanding of the numerous issues surrounding the continued integration of information technology (IT) and clinical engineering.

By combining their expertise and knowledge, leaders of the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI), the American College of Clinical Engineering (ACCE), and the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) will work together to avoid the duplication of efforts already in progress with the goal of improving patient care and safety, and to boost the quality and cost-effectiveness of customer service.

"For the first time, we have a written agreement that addresses collaboration on many of the issues clinical engineers and IT professionals have been attempting to iron out," says Bob Stiefel, the chair of [AAMI's](#) board of directors and clinical engineering director at the University of Maryland Medical System.

The agreement will also focus on:

- Fostering further development of a united voice for IT and clinical engineering concerns, and provide a forum for its expression.
- Providing a mechanism for developing resources, guidelines, and best practices for the CEIT community, and provide education, research, certification, public policy, terminology, mentoring, advocacy, networking, and career services.
- Exploring appropriate collaboration of clinical engineering/IT functions.
- Developing a framework for representing the interests of clinical engineering and IT departments to the broader health care community.

"Our members and leadership recognize that CE-IT convergence and collaboration is of critical importance to the industry and its ability to deliver quality patient care," said Stephen Grimes, president of [ACCE](#). "They believe this agreement provides a solid foundation on which we can work together to build a framework of programs and resources to address the challenges of convergence."

According to Joyce Sensmeier, VP of informatics with [HIMSS](#), "As patient care devices take advantage of 'smart' technology and become more interoperable, IT experts and clinicians must work together to ensure that workflow issues are addressed. Together, we can define a vision of the future in healthcare delivery."