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# Associations Team Up to Advance Clinical Engineering/IT Integration

by Patrick Bernat, Editor, AAMI News

Three national associations have joined forces to develop guidance documents, share best practices, and promote an understanding of the issues surrounding the ongoing integration of information technology (IT) and clinical engineering.

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) have signed an agreement to develop a joint Clinical Engineering/IT (CEIT) community, thus pooling their expertise and knowledge and avoiding the duplication of efforts under way.

The agreement is intended to help improve patient care and safety and to boost the quality and cost-effectiveness of customer service. The agreement also seeks to:

- Foster further development of a united voice for IT and clinical engineering concerns, and provide a forum for its expression.
- Provide 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.

- Explore appropriate collaboration of clinical engineering/IT functions.
- Develop a framework for representing the interests of clinical engineering and IT departments to the broader healthcare community.

"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.

Stiefel is also a member of AAMI's Technology Management Council (TMC), which represents technology managers from hospitals, biomedical societies, and industry. The TMC recently launched a new project designed to assess the current status of technology management within healthcare facilities and explore the field's future chal-

lenges and opportunities.

Stephen Grimes, president of ACCE, agrees. "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. 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, vice president 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." **AMERICAN**

For more information about this effort, contact Steve Campbell at [scampbell@aami.org](mailto:scampbell@aami.org). For more information on these organizations please visit their websites at [www.aami.org](http://www.aami.org), [www.himss.org](http://www.himss.org) and [www.acenet.org](http://www.acenet.org).



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