Dear Mr. Nixon,

Thanks for your consideration of the Governance Framework. HITSAC did indeed put much thought and effort into developing it, and we appreciate your critique of it. For those functions that you and your staff believe to be outside of the purview or resources of VITA, please suggest alternative ways for state government accomplish those functions. We look forward to your analysis and recommendations.

As an aside, we on HITSAC are delighted with the staff support we receive from VITA.

Best wishes,

Marshall Ruffin, MD

Chairman, Health Information Technology Standards Advisory Committee
Commonwealth of Virginia

Chief Technology Officer
Inova Health System
Office: 703-289-2027

Dr. Ruffin,

Thank you for the time and effort that you and HITSAC invested on how the Commonwealth can achieve and sustain interoperability for Health IT. From my initial review of the Proposed Governance Framework it is obvious that you and your team gave considerable thought to the proposal.

In the next several days I will work closely with my staff to determine how much of the proposal VITA can undertake. As I am sure you know, VITA plans to launch a new program and hire the resources needed to deploy several key components of the MITA effort. Some of those resources are going to be allocated to support the data and data exchange standards work required by the program. The proposed framework does go well beyond support of the MITA program however, and VITA must ensure that the proposal is both within our current mission (as defined by the Code of Virginia) and financial budget.

I will also be consulting with my legal team to evaluate whether we are on solid legal ground in pursuing all of the proposed governance changes. To date, VITA has had no role in enforcing data standards except to ensure that statewide or enterprise information technology contracts include provisions for compliance with data standards. The proposed framework introduces significant enforcement and oversight functions to VITA and we need to be certain that the authority is clearly articulated in the Code of Virginia. It is also likely that some aspects of the proposal will require statutory changes by the Legislative branch.

Finally, and as you have acknowledged, this will require the approval of the Secretary of Technology and I will be discussing this proposal with him and with Dr. Hazel. Susan McCleary or I will be back in touch with you to keep you updated on our progress.

As CIO, and as the former legislator who helped to create HITSAC, I greatly appreciate your good work. Please convey my thanks to all the members of HITSAC as well.

Cordially,

Sam Nixon, Jr.
Chief Information Officer
Virginia Information Technologies Agency
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VITA Customer Care Center - Call **1 (866) 637-8482** (toll free) to report an outage or request service. Or e-mail the VCCC at vccc@vita.virginia.gov. **Please note**: E-mail should not be used to report critical issues or outages impacting an agency. To report a critical issue, please call the VCCC directly.

From: "Marshall D. Ruffin" <>
To: Duffey, Jim (GOV); Hazel, Bill (GOV); Nixon, Sam (VITA)
Cc:; Jackson, Karen (GOV); McCleary, Susan (VITA); Barnes, Kimberly A. (VDH); Mix, Dave (DMAS); Simonoff, Jerry (VITA); Cindy Gramlich, Jennifer W. Siciliano
Sent: Friday, May 27, 2011 8:50:02 AM
Subject: Governance Framework for Information Technology

Dear Secretaries Hazel and Duffey and CIO Nixon,

At the May 19th HITSAC meeting we voted to approve the attached document as a framework to ensure interoperability across state government. The document is the culmination of discussions that began at our February meeting where it became clear that the current governance processes and procedures employed by the Commonwealth could not adequately address the use of standards defined and managed by Standards Development Organizations outside of state government.

We circulated a draft of this document to the Health and Human Resources CIOs as well as to Data Owners and Stewards at the Department of Accounts, Department of General Services, Department of Planning and Budget, Virginia State Police, Department of Human Resource Management, Taxation, Treasury and others. We considered the feedback provided and attempted to answer their concerns while protecting the discipline HITSAC believes is crucial to achieving interoperability.

HITSAC recognizes that the implementation schedule for the MITA program is aggressive and demanding. It will take discipline to achieve the schedule and to ensure that standards serve as the basis for interoperability. We believe that the attached proposed framework protects the schedule; it is our best recommendation for how to achieve the MITA vision in the time required.

As you will see in the document, it is not an end but rather a beginning. Adoption of the framework means that the Commonwealth will have work to do to update existing strategies, policies, standards and guidelines. In other words, time is of the essence. HITSAC is prepared to do its part to assist in updating and reviewing these other documents to ensure consistent application of the framework but we need your approval to move forward.

As Chairman of HITSAC I would be happy to discuss this with any or all of you should you wish to do so. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes,

Marshall Ruffin, MD
MPH, MBA, CPE, FACPE

Chairman, Health Information Technology Standards Advisory Committee
Commonwealth of Virginia

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