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Prescriptions for Excellence in **HEALTH CARE**

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE AND ELI LILLY AND CO.

The Importance of HIT

By Alex Azar

Health information technology (HIT) is generating a great deal of interest in the health care industry. Theoretically, it gives us the ability to coordinate all existing medical knowledge about a patient and to incorporate new information on a real-time basis. By amassing relevant data electronically from many

different sources (eg, drug companies' clinical trials, health insurers' claims data, and physicians' documentation of patients' medical histories), HIT could allow us to know more about patients more quickly and in greater detail than ever before.

As is often the case, theory is not easily translated into practice. Individual providers have been slow to adopt new technology, and we have yet

to develop the level of systems integration necessary for high-level information exchange. In the next issue of *Prescriptions for Excellence*, this column and the feature articles will highlight HIT applications with a focus on positive solutions to benefit patients, physicians, and the industry as a whole.

Alex Azar is Senior Vice President for Corporate Affairs and Communications at Eli Lilly and Company