



**Homeland
Security**

December 29, 2009

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20428

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

The Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) Advisory Committee (HSIN AC) met October 19-21, 2009 to provide advice and recommendations to the DHS Office of Operations Coordination and Planning (OPS) with respect to the HSIN program and the upgrade of the HSIN web portal software. The HSIN AC respectfully submits the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

During previous meetings, the HSIN AC has identified the excessive number and duplicative nature of existing information sharing systems, both internal and external to DHS, as a significant impediment to the successful rollout, adoption, and ultimate success of HSIN. The number of overlapping systems also is an impediment to effective information sharing among homeland security mission partners at the federal, state and local levels. In several previous reports the HSIN AC has recommended reducing the number of systems that serve essentially the same purpose, and the HSIN AC's support for these recommendations has continued to grow. We therefore recommend that the Secretary:

- Clearly designate HSIN as the DHS system by which all components are to share unclassified and SBU information.
- Re-emphasize the DHS portal consolidation process and direct the DHS CIO to work with the OPS CIO to develop a cost sharing model and implementation plan to move ahead as quickly as possible to consolidate appropriate DHS portals onto HSIN.

- Direct FEMA and any other DHS granting authority to stop funding systems that duplicate HSIN's purpose and capabilities. Rather, grant funds should be used to encourage state and local partners to fund personnel and other actions in support of HSIN.

Recommendation 2

The HSIN AC provides important state and local input into the HSIN program, however, it is the newly established DHS HSIN Mission Operators Committee (MOC) that routinely will be making policy recommendations and prioritizing requirements for the HSIN system. The MOC would also benefit from state and local input. We therefore recommend that:

- State and local officials be included as members of the MOC to the extent possible without turning the MOC into a FACA committee.

Recommendation 3

The HSIN AC understands that HSIN must be secure in order to be a trusted vehicle for information sharing. HSIN must also be useable and accessible to a wide range of mission partners in a variety of circumstances with different security needs. Security and accessibility must be balanced, and to a certain extent tailored to specific user groups, in order for HSIN to be successful across the entire homeland security mission space. We therefore recommend that the Secretary:

- Support OPS' proposal to implement a layered security strategy for HSIN.

We very much appreciate the emphasis you have placed on improving information sharing with state and local partners, and hope these recommendations help further the Department's progress toward that goal.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael Milstead
Chair, HSIN Advisory Committee