

**For Immediate Release
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Greater Flint Health Coalition Awarded Regional Health Information Grant to Improve Quality and Reduce Costs

The Greater Flint Health Coalition (GFHC) is pleased to announce that it has received one of eight Health Information Technology Exchange Grants provided by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Department of Community Health. The grant, totaling \$359,475, will be used to develop a plan for implementing a regional health information exchange (HIE) in the Genesee Medical Trading Area composed of Genesee, Lapeer, and Shiawassee Counties. \$267,400 has been awarded for Phase I of the grant which began June 18, 2007 and ends September 30, 2007. The remainder of the award will be applied to Phase II funding which if fully approved will total \$368,300 and cover the time period of October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008.

The goal of HIE is to enable the movement of healthcare information electronically across organizations within a determined region improving access to clinical data to provide safe, efficient, effective, and equitable patient-centered care.

The GFHC's Cost and Resource Planning Committee will function as the Steering Committee for the Regional HIE Planning Project. The Cost and Resource Planning Committee has representation from all the community's healthcare stakeholders including: hospitals, insurers, physicians, public health, business, and consumers.

Activities of the Regional HIE Planning Project will involve:

- o identifying among regional healthcare stakeholders interest, capabilities, and support for a HIE

- creating a sustainable business plan for the HIE that includes sources for future funding
- identifying the types of information initially and in the long-term that will be shared through the HIE
- educating the community, healthcare providers, and other pertinent stakeholders on the purpose and benefits of the HIE
- developing solutions that: 1.) facilitate the identification, correlation, linking, searching, and access to patient-centric information; 2.) accommodate the sharing of information originating from numerous disparate systems, in multiple formats, and via a variety of technologies; 3.) account for scalability of the HIE as new providers, systems, and geographic areas are broadened; and 4.) ensure the most stringent privacy and security controls are in place to protect consumer privacy
- designing the HIE for interaction with public health reporting
- providing for future interfacing with other HIEs under development in other Michigan regions
- improving the understanding of the health status of the residents impacted by the HIE

To successfully complete the objectives of the Regional HIE Planning Project subgroups will be formed and monitored by the Cost and Resource Planning Committee. A workgroup has already been formed to investigate narrowing the focus of activities for achievable outcomes. Donald Kooy, President and CEO of McLaren Regional Medical Center, will chair the workgroup. Additionally as Chief Information Officer for McLaren Health Care Corporation, Mr. Kooy brings noted expertise to the Regional HIE Planning Project. Members joining him on the workgroup are from Genesee County organizations currently utilizing and benefiting from electronic health databases:

- Jamal Ghani, Senior Vice President, Hurley Medical Center
- Cathy Heiman, Vice President, Ambulatory Health Network, Genesys Health System
- Erik Helms, Director, Medical Economics, HealthPlus of Michigan
- Mary Smith, Vice President of Health Care Delivery Strategy, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- Carol Solomon, Vice President of Operations, McLaren Health Plan
- Gayle Consiglio, Chief Information Officer, PHNS (Provider Healthnet Services)

Once a desired data exchange model is developed among Genesee County's three hospitals the HIE can expand to include other hospitals in Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties; other providers of services such as private physician practices, pharmacies, and diagnostic laboratories; and public health. A long term goal of such projects is that a developed HIE would be linked to others in the State, Midwest, and United States creating a seamless system that would make necessary information available to healthcare providers that need it when they need it. HIEs have the potential to improve the quality of care by reducing medical errors, lower healthcare costs by

reducing duplicative care and administrative expenses, and improve access to care by supporting consultation services and bringing research findings to practicing providers.

In addition to the Greater Flint Health Coalition, other Michigan communities receiving HIE planning grants include:

- Alliance for Health (13 western Michigan Counties)
- Altarum Institute (5 Detroit Metropolitan Counties)
- Central Michigan University Research Corporation (12 Mid Michigan Counties)
- North Central Council of the Michigan Hospital Association (all counties in the northern Lower Peninsula)

Grant funding was also provided to Michigan State University to develop a HIE Resource Center at the State level and Capital Area Health Alliance and Marquette General Health System to further implement the HIEs in their communities.

The Greater Flint Health Coalition is a 501(c) 3 organization that serves as a community/institutional partnership and multi-faceted collaborative body. Its mission is twofold: Improve the health status of the residents of Genesee County; improve the quality and cost effectiveness of the health care system in the community. The Greater Flint Health Coalition Board of Directors is a broad reflection of the community's leadership including representatives from government, health providers, labor, business, insurers, education, consumers, and faith-based organizations.

For additional information about the Regional HIE Planning Project, please contact the Greater Flint Health Coalition by telephone at (810) 232-2228 or by email at gfhc@flint.org.