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Maine Launches Nation's Largest Statewide Electronic Health Exchange

Portland, Maine: As policymakers in Washington debate how to reform the nation's healthcare system, Maine has taken a major step toward transforming how care will be delivered to the state's 1.3 million residents.

Physicians, hospital leaders, consumer advocates and public health officials gathered in Portland today to announce that Maine's nonprofit **HealthInfoNet** network will "go live" this summer, making Maine the largest statewide electronic health information exchange (HIE) using clinical data. Only Delaware and Vermont have similar statewide exchanges in operation.

This announcement coincided with a visit to Maine by the **Obama Administration's** top health information technology official, **Dr. David Blumenthal**, who was the keynote speaker at the statewide Hanley Leadership Forum today in Portland and then visited Maine Medical Center's emergency department to see first hand how the new system will be used by medical care teams.

Under development for the past five years, HealthInfoNet will allow caregivers quick and efficient access to key clinical information they need to provide the best possible care for their patients. Health information technology is a major element of the nation's emerging health reform strategy. Electronic exchanges such as HealthInfoNet will be critical in connecting the rapidly growing number of providers using electronic medical records and other systems.

HIEs are expected to reduce medical errors and lead to better, more informed treatment decisions that will save lives and money. As HealthInfoNet expands services across the state, an estimated \$50 million per year in healthcare costs is expected to be saved as caregivers order fewer unnecessary and duplicative tests, procedures, prescriptions and hospital admissions.

Despite a substantial budget shortfall, the State of Maine has included \$1.7 million in its 2010-2011 budget to allow HealthInfoNet to "go live" this summer and to position Maine for federal matching funds that are expected to be available later this year under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Some \$8 million has been raised so far to build HealthInfoNet. Another \$12 million is needed to build out the statewide infrastructure. It's estimated that it will cost approximately \$6 million to operate HealthInfoNet on an annual basis.

Beginning this summer, more than 2,000 healthcare providers---including nearly half of the rural and urban hospitals across Maine and one-third of practicing physicians in Maine---will have access for the first time to HealthInfoNet's secure clinical data repository. Use of the system will be phased in over the next several months.

Hospitals and physician practices taking part in HealthInfoNet's current demonstration phase (which began in early 2008) account for more than half of the state's annual inpatient hospital admissions, 50 percent of the annual emergency department visits, and nearly 40 percent of Maine's outpatient visits each year. Following the successful completion of the demonstration phase in mid-2010, plans call for HealthInfoNet to be expanded over time to include other providers who care for Maine's entire population.

Today, a significant percentage of patient-specific clinical information in Maine is stored in paper-based records. Paper-based records can be cumbersome for caregivers to access---and very difficult to share, particularly when information is needed on an urgent basis. Through the demonstration phase, many hospitals, physicians and other caregivers across Maine will---for the first time ever---have access (with their patients' consent) to a more complete and up-to-date clinical profile of their patients. A new consolidated "electronic health record" (EHR) made possible by HealthInfoNet will contain critical information drawn from records that have traditionally been separately maintained in physician practices, hospitals, laboratories and other disparate care settings. Over time, the HealthInfoNet network also will enable individuals to have greater access to their own medical records.

Armed with more complete and timely information, caregivers say they can provide better quality care and improve the coordination of care, particularly for those patients who see several providers and receive care in more than one community or care setting.

Organizations taking part in the demonstration phase include Maine's four largest health delivery systems (Central Maine Health Care, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, MaineGeneral Medical Centers and MaineHealth) as well as an independent, multi-site primary care practice, Martin's Point Health Care, and an independent rural hospital, Franklin Memorial Hospital located in Farmington. Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which is developing a statewide public health information system, will be part of the demonstration phase. This linkage will support the laboratory reporting requirements mandated by Maine law for disease outbreak management purposes.

The health provider organizations listed above include 15 rural and urban hospitals and about 2,000 physicians. Many of Maine's other community hospitals have been involved in HealthInfoNet's planning process and are expected to become part of the statewide network following the demonstration phase.

"The efforts of HealthInfoNet to advance electronic information-sharing to improve Maine's healthcare are extremely important to protect the State's public health," said **Dr. Dora Anne Mills**, of Maine CDC, who pointed out that the federal government has called for the nation to implement more effective real-time public health event monitoring and rapid response in order to ensure that the population is protected from emerging public health threats. "HealthInfoNet is advancing this directive here in Maine," she said.

According to Dr. Mills, automated electronic reporting of public health threats has been shown nationally to improve the completeness and timeliness of reporting to public health authorities, compared to manual processes, allowing diseases to be detected and responded to earlier. The partnership between Maine CDC and HealthInfoNet will automate reporting from healthcare to public health, shortening the time required to respond to and protect the public from health threats

The information being automated between healthcare organizations and Maine CDC is already required by law to be reported to public health agencies in order to protect communities. The relationship with HealthInfoNet will make this reporting quicker and more complete for about 90% of the volume of testing currently being reported by the participating healthcare laboratories.

HealthInfoNet has retained 3M Health Information Systems and Orion Health to build and operate Maine's statewide health information exchange, enabling all participating healthcare organizations to achieve semantic interoperability in the exchange of data for patient care. In addition, DrFirst, Inc. has been retained to provide coordination in automating electronic prescribing services and access to medication history information to medical care teams. These three organizations have extensive experience building and operating technical networks in the United States and other countries.

Organized as a public-private partnership, HealthInfoNet has received funding support from a wide range of private foundations, provider organizations and state and federal government agencies.

Public opinion research completed in late 2006 found that many Maine people are concerned about the prospect of medical errors and believe that better coordination and communication among their providers is needed to improve healthcare quality and safety. Individuals in Maine and across the nation say they want more access to their own medical records so that they can verify the accuracy of information in the records and become more engaged in their own care. A Consumer Advisory Committee is assisting HealthInfoNet in the establishment of privacy and security policies designed to insure that systems are in place to protect the privacy of individuals' medical information.

HealthInfoNet was established in early 2006 as a statewide independent nonprofit organization. Its establishment followed a feasibility study and planning and development process that found strong support for a new network. HealthInfoNet's Board of Directors includes physicians, hospital leaders, consumers, employers, government officials, insurance executives and others.

For more information, contact HealthInfoNet Executive Director Devore Culver at dculver@hinfonet.org or Project Consultant Jim Harnar at jharnar@maine.rr.com---or visit www.hinfonet.org

SEE FACT SHEET BELOW

Fact Sheet

HealthInfoNet Demonstration Project Participants

Seven organizations (and many of their affiliated hospitals & physician practices) are participating in HealthInfoNet's 24-month demonstration project). Here is a list of the seven organizations, listed by category:

A. Four Major Health Delivery Systems & Their Affiliates

Central Maine Healthcare, Lewiston

- Bridgton Hospital, Bridgton
- Central Maine Medical Center, Lewiston
- Rumford Hospital, Rumford

Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, Brewer

- Aroostook Medical Center, Presque Isle
- Blue Hill Memorial Hospital, Blue Hill
- Charles A. Dean Hospital, Greenville
- Eastern Maine Medical Center, Bangor
- Inland Hospital, Waterville
- Sebecook Valley Hospital, Pittsfield

MaineGeneral Medical Centers, Augusta and Waterville

- MaineGeneral Medical Centers, Augusta and Waterville

MaineHealth, Portland

- Maine Medical Center, Portland
 - Miles Memorial Hospital, Damariscotta
 - Stephens Memorial Hospital, Norway
 - St. Andrews Hospital, Boothbay Harbor

B. One Independent, Multi-Site Primary Care Physician Practice

Martin's Point Health Care located in Bangor, Brunswick and Portland.

C. One Rural "Safety Net" Hospital

Franklin Memorial Hospital, Farmington

D. Maine CDC

Total Providers Statewide:

2,070 (including 15 hospitals listed above & more than one third of the practicing physicians in state)



HealthInfoNet Technical Partners

Partner Quotes:

“One year into its demonstration project, Maine HealthInfoNet sets a standard for achieving HIE sustainability. We are proud to be HealthInfoNet’s technology partner in enabling health-care data exchange across the entire state. Improving the interoperability of clinical information can help reduce medical errors, control costs, and improve the quality of care for Maine citizens.”

- Jon Lindekugel, President, 3M Health Information Systems

“Maine HealthInfoNet’s accomplishment demonstrates that a sustainable model for health data interoperability can be achieved using best of breed technology to provide physicians access to clinical data for better patient health. It’s been an honor to work with HealthInfoNet and our partners on this project to solve their interoperability challenges, one of the biggest issues facing hospitals today.”

- Paul Viskovich, Orion Health President North America and EMEA

“Maine HealthInfoNet through its statewide health information exchange, is tearing down the walls that have kept important patient health information locked away from providers who work in separate practices or hospitals. Our mutual commitment to creating a community-wide, secure network for clinical document exchange has laid the groundwork for safer and more effective care.”

- G. Cameron Deemer, President of DrFirst.

Company Background:



3M Health Information Systems, a subsidiary of 3M Company, delivers comprehensive software and consulting services to help organizations worldwide improve documentation, quality and financial performance across the healthcare continuum. 3M’s highly scalable, interoperable system, consisting of the 3M Clinical Data Repository, 3M Enterprise Master Person Index, and the 3M Healthcare Data Dictionary, is being used by Health Information Exchange (HIE) initiatives at the U.S. regional, state, and national level, including Maine’s statewide HIE and the City of Louisville’s health record bank. 3M products can achieve the highest level of data interoperability and have been proven in large-scale global implementations, such as the U.S. Department of Defense’s electronic medical record. For more information about 3M Health Information Systems, visit www.3Mhis.com or call 800-367-2447.



DrFirst, Inc. has been retained to provide coordination in automating electronic prescribing services and access to medication history information to ambulatory physicians and in the hospital setting. DrFirst is a Surescripts Gold Solution Provider with its award-winning, Rcopia electronic prescription management system. Founded in 2000, DrFirst creates innovative services targeted to physicians in both ambulatory and acute care environments. DrFirst solutions are widely integrated with over 65 practice management and electronic medical records software through its “Open Borders” program, and the company counts among its client base not only physician practices, but major health plans, health systems, and EMR vendors. DrFirst partners with Surescripts for pharmacy connectivity, health plan information, and patient medication history. More information about DrFirst can be found at www.drfirst.com. For more DrFirst news, follow us on twitter at www.twitter.com/drfirst. Follow DrFirst video feeds at www.youtube.com/user/drfirst



Orion Health™ is a leading global provider of clinical workflow and integration technology for the healthcare sector. Orion Health’s easy-to-use solutions and applications improve patient care and clinical decision making by providing integrated health data in a single, unified view. By enhancing existing healthcare information systems, the Orion Health Rhapsody® Integration Engine, Concerto® Physician Portal, and workflow solutions provide healthcare workers with easy access to patient data and trends, and reduce errors and omissions by streamlining information transfer. Worldwide, Orion Health implements health information communities involving over 35 million patients with tens of thousands of active users including Maine’s Health-InfoNet, Vermont Health Information Exchange, Canada Health Infoway, Alberta Health Services and Spain’s IB Salut. Orion Health’s partners include leading health system integrators and IT vendors such as Accenture, Allscripts, IBM, Oracle, Phillips and others. Orion Health has more than 1,000 clients around the world, including Lahey Clinic, UCLA Medical Center, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and several of the U.K.’s NHS Trust Hospitals. More information can be found at <http://www.orionhealth.com>.

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