



For Immediate Release

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Quality Quest for Health of Illinois Awarded HIE Planning Grants

(Peoria, IL) – Quality Quest for Health of Illinois received three one-year grants from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services to coordinate health information exchange (HIE) planning for the Peoria, Bloomington, and Decatur areas. A fourth grant, to the Champaign/Urbana Public Health District, will be used, in part, to pay Quest for managing their planning process. The three grants to Quality Quest total \$529,688.

“I would like to congratulate all of the recipients, and I look forward to working with them in the weeks and months ahead to implement a state-level Health Information Exchange,” said Department of Healthcare and Family Services Director Barry S. Maram. “With these planning grants, Illinois is now one step closer to an HIE that will improve the quality of patient care by enabling providers to coordinate care and to quickly access up-to-date patient information.”

Health information exchange is the process of securely sharing information from electronic medical records, insurance claims and other sources, such as prescribing information, between providers. Sharing health information enhances coordination between various caregivers and helps make patient care better. HIE helps prevent duplication of services and it helps lower medical errors. It also helps make a complex system less confusing for patients and families. Other benefits include reducing health disparities, reducing paper, and helping control rapidly escalating healthcare costs.

“Planning ahead for health information exchange capabilities puts Illinois in a better position to take advantage of anticipated federal stimulus funds for health information technology,” says Dr. Gail Amundson, President and CEO of Quest. “We will develop a needs assessment and plan for the region that once implemented, will make it possible for providers to share medical information, even across totally different computer systems.”

On February 4, 2009, Governor Pat Quinn signed Senate Bill 1132 into law, appropriating \$3 million to the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to establish a program for health information exchange planning. The state is divided into 16 Medical Trading Areas (MTA), with each area being awarded one grant. Quest convened several central Illinois healthcare stakeholders to join together and submit applications for the planning grants. Collaborators included area health departments, hospitals, behavioral health and rehabilitation centers, laboratories, pharmacies, physician offices, and Federally Qualified Health Centers. Letters of support were received from numerous organizations in each region.

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Organizations that participated in the grant submission process were:

Statewide organizations: Illinois Quality Improvement Organization, Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network , the Illinois Hospital Association, the Indiana Health Information Exchange, and the Heartland Healthcare Coalition

Peoria Area: Fayette Companies, Heartland Community Health Clinic, Peoria City/County Health Department, Easter Seals, Methodist Medical Center of Illinois, Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pekin Hospital, Proctor Hospital, OSF HealthCare System , Cottage Hospital, Graham Hospital, Knox County Health Department, Knox County Nursing Home, and Woodford County Health Department

Bloomington Area: Bromenn Regional Medical Center, Chestnut Health Systems, Dr. John Warner Hospital, Illinois State University, Livingston County Public Health Department, Streatorland Quality Care PHO, St. Mary's Hospital, Streator Area Chamber of Commerce

Decatur Area: Decatur Memorial Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital

Champaign Area: Champaign/Urbana Public Health District, Carle Clinic

Grants were evaluated based on plans for meaningful use of HIE such as eRX (electronic prescribing), active exchange of health information, electronic reporting of quality measures, and on broad stakeholder commitment.

“We look forward to working with our collaborators in each of the four regions. The governance structure will consist of an umbrella HIE Advisory Committee, which will provide direction, help coordinate regional advisory councils, and oversee work groups,” says Dr. Amundson.

For more information, visit the Quality Quest website at www.qualityquest.org.

About Quality Quest

Quality Quest for Health of Illinois is a healthcare collaborative working together to transform healthcare in our state. We bring physicians, hospitals, health plans, employers, patients and families together to focus on creating healthier communities with better patient outcomes and improving the quality of care delivered. We collect data related to specific Quest projects and report performance information to the medical community and the public. The information helps providers compare their performance to peers and regional/national benchmarks and to improve patient care.

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