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HIP TN Board endorses state Health Information Exchange plans

The Health Information Partnership for Tennessee, a non-profit collaborative effort of patients, providers, health insurers, self-insured employers, hospitals and pharmacies, on May 20 endorsed the state's plan to establish a statewide health information exchange to improve the quality of care for Tennesseans.

The plan, which will be submitted by the state to the federal Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology by the end of the month, outlines the plans of state officials and HIP TN to create a program to make electronic health records available to providers on a network across Tennessee. Federal officials will review the plan over the summer, and if approved will be implemented in the fall of 2010.

"We share the view that while technology is a critical tool, the primary focus is not technology itself, but improving health," Board Chair Robert S. Gordon, said in a letter to Dr. David Blumenthal, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology at the Department of Health and Human Services. "We believe the Tennessee State HIE Strategic and Operational Plans are based on a sound understanding of how to achieve these goals in our state's environment."

HIP TN has formed five working groups to focus on the vital components of a health information exchange program. Currently, Health Information Partnership for Tennessee operates the following working groups:

- Clinical. To gather clinical priorities from stakeholders and to coordinate these priorities consistent with the State Plan and Meaningful Use requirements.
- Privacy and Security. To make policy recommendations consistent with the State Plan that helps insure the privacy and security of HIE intra- and inter-state all as consistent with the laws, rules, regulations and standards as may apply.
- Technology. Coordinate with existing efforts at the state and local level to define, recommend and support technical infrastructure, consistent with nationally recognized standards, which helps meet the goals set out in State's Cooperative Agreement with ONC,
- Sustainability. To work with the State in defining funding models for dissemination of grant funds, help identify and maximize funding sources and develop a financial sustainability model for statewide HIE.
- Consumer. To insure that consumers are properly informed on HIE and how they may participate in the development and use of HIE for the betterment of the care they receive.

"Consumers have a keen interest in improving health information technology," said HIP TN board member Patrick Willard, Advocacy Director for AARP in Tennessee. "It is important to both improve the efficiency and accuracy of health data to prevent medical errors, and to assure the privacy and security in the health information exchange."



HIP TN is proceeding with plans to find a vendor for Tennessee's health information exchange. Plans are to issue a request for proposals in June with a target date for implementation of Sept. 30, 2010.

Health Information Partnership for Tennessee (HIP-TN) is a non-profit organization formed in 2009 which works to improve access to health information through a statewide collaborative process by providing services and infrastructure for the secure electronic exchange and use of health information. HIP-TN brings together stakeholders representing the state's health care providers, health plans, physicians, businesses and consumers to create a health information exchange that will enable the right medical information to get to the right provider at the right time to enhance patient care. For more information, please visit www.hiptn.org