

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt in Boston to recognize efforts by Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative and Massachusetts Health Quality Partners to advance health care quality and transparency by promoting health information technology

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Boston – On March 27, 2008, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt will present the Massachusetts Chartered Value Exchange with a federal distinction for a track record for the public release of trusted health care performance information and for implementing cutting-edge technology to transform health care at the local level. The Massachusetts Chartered Value Exchange is a joint venture of the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative (MAeHC) and Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP).

Secretary Leavitt is visiting Boston to recognize the Massachusetts Chartered Value Exchange for taking actions to convene community purchasers, health plans, providers, and consumers to improve the quality of health care and address rising costs. He will present the national designation on Thursday afternoon at a forum with local leaders.

The Massachusetts Chartered Value Exchange is one of 14 partnerships of providers, employers, insurers, and consumers that HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt designated as the country's first Chartered Value Exchanges (CVEs), community-based multi-stakeholder collaboratives on the forefront of health care transformations.

Dr. Judy Ann Bigby, the state's Secretary of Health and Human Services, congratulated the Massachusetts Chartered Value Exchange on this prestigious recognition. "Ensuring that the people of the Commonwealth have the information they need to make informed

choices about their care is critical in improving the quality of and reducing the cost of health care,” she noted. “The Patrick administration is pleased that the federal government recognized the joint venture between Massachusetts Health Quality Partners and the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative for its leadership in promoting transparency and the use of technology in health care.”

“We are enthusiastic about furthering the health transformation that we are already seeing in the Massachusetts,” said Barbra Rabson, executive director of Massachusetts Health Quality Partners. “We look forward to sharing our experiences and to learning from other successful ventures around the country.”

As Chartered Value Exchanges, communities will have access to information from Medicare that gauges the quality of care physicians provide to patients. These performance measurement results can be combined with similar private-sector data to produce a comprehensive consumer guide on the quality of care available. In addition, these communities will join a nationwide Learning Network sponsored by the HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. This network will provide peer-to-peer learning experiences through facilitated meetings, both face-to-face and on the Web.

Micky Tripathi, president and CEO of MAeHC, looks forward to linking the health IT and quality improvement efforts in the Commonwealth. “We are pleased to be a member of a distinguished group of organizations that share our commitment to harnessing technology to improve the quality of health care. Being recognized by the Department of Health and Human Services confirms our belief that fostering greater use of electronic health records should be a national priority.”

Over the last year, HHS has designated more than 100 Community Leaders that are encouraging the growth of collaboratives working to drive health care reform. These groups were the first eligible to apply for CVE status. After an extensive peer-review process of 38 applications, 14 collaboratives in a dozen states have been selected to receive charters from Secretary Leavitt. Community Leaders interested in becoming Chartered Value Exchanges will have an opportunity to apply later this spring.

CVEs represent one of a number of initiatives undertaken by HHS to implement a bold vision for health care reform built on four cornerstones: advancing interoperable health information technology, measuring and publishing quality information to enable consumers to make better decisions about their care, measuring and publishing price information to give consumers information they need to make decisions on purchasing health care, and promoting incentives for quality and efficiency of care. One of HHS’s first initiatives to combine Medicare and commercial data to produce quality information was the Better Quality Information project, in which the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services funded 6 sites across the country. MHQP, one of the sites selected for the BQI project, will bring a wealth of experience from the BQI effort to the CVE and its endeavors.

To learn more about Chartered Value Exchanges, please visit www.ahrq.gov/qual/value/localnetworks.htm.

Massachusetts Health Quality Partners is a broad-based coalition of physicians, hospitals, health plans, purchasers, consumers, and government agencies working together to promote improvement in the quality of health care services in Massachusetts. MHQP was first established in 1995 by a group of Massachusetts health care leaders who identified the importance of valid, comparable measures to drive improvement. MHQP provides reliable information to help physicians improve the quality of care they provide their patients and help consumers take an active role in making informed decisions about their health care. For more information about Massachusetts Health Quality Partners, please visit www.mhqp.org.

The Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative was formed in 2004 as an initiative of the physician community to bring together the state's major health care stakeholders for the purpose of establishing an EHR system that would enhance the quality, efficiency, and safety of care in Massachusetts. MAeHC endeavors to transform the delivery of health care using electronic health records and health information exchange. In partnership with its three pilot communities and thirty-four member organizations, MAeHC is fostering rapid widespread adoption of these systems to enhance the quality, efficiency, and safety of health care in Massachusetts. To learn more about the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative, please visit www.maehc.org.

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