

**MASSACHUSETTS e-HEALTH COLLABORATIVE**  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**MASSACHUSETTS STATEWIDE e HEALTH INITIATIVE  
SELECTS THREE DEMONSTRATION COMMUNITIES**

Waltham, Mass. – (March 28, 2005) – Three communities have been selected as pilots sites for the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative's (MAeHC) first demonstration project testing community-wide implementation of electronic health records (EHRs) in Massachusetts.

The three pilot communities were selected from a group of 35 outstanding applicants to embark on a 24-month to 36-month project to study and demonstrate the effectiveness and practicality of implementing electronic health records in community practice settings. The goals are to improve the quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness of care.

The three communities are:

<b><u>Community</u></b>	<b><u>Core hospital system(s)</u></b>
Greater Brockton	Brockton Hospital Good Samaritan Medical Center
Greater Newburyport	Anna Jaques Hospital
Northern Berkshire	North Adams Regional Hospital

Although electronic health records have already demonstrated ability to improve care on a small-scale basis, their large-scale implementation and impact have yet to be demonstrated. Challenges to be addressed will include identifying and implementing best ways to convert from paper records to electronic ones and best approaches to sharing information across practices and sites, while preserving patient privacy and confidentiality. The MAeHC is committed to incorporating state-of-the-art methods for helping to maintain the security of personal medical information and will attempt to exceed state and federal standards.

Participants within each community will include the local acute-care hospital or group of hospitals, physician practices, long-term care facilities, nursing and home health care agencies, and community health centers. The selected communities were chosen for their local leadership, and the commitment of the

local health care community. These participants will be excellent models for expanding EHR adoption across the state, due to the diversity of their populations, geography, and IT maturity.

“We are thrilled to have these three communities as pilots,” said Dr. David Bates, Chair of MAeHC’s Pilot Selection and Evaluation Working Group and Chief of General Medicine at Brigham & Womens’ Hospital. “Together they offer a terrific set of laboratories for us to learn how such technology can be most readily adopted, how to get the most value out of it, and how to quickly and effectively replicate the lessons learned in other communities across the state.”

“We are equally thrilled that thirty-five Massachusetts communities responded to our request for applications with a level of sophistication, energy, and commitment that should be an inspiration to us all,” said Micky Tripathi, the president and chief executive officer of the MAeHC. “That overwhelming response is a call to action for all of us to learn and share as much as we can, as fast as we can, to get these vital technologies into the hands of health care professionals throughout the Commonwealth.”

Mr. Tripathi noted that, in addition to funding the pilot projects, “MAeHC will attempt to help other Massachusetts communities that are seeking to implement such systems by sharing with them the infrastructure, expertise and arrangements that we create for the pilots.”

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. The value of electronic health records is widely acknowledged, but the significant capital and time required to implement such a system are frequently cited as significant barriers to adoption. It has been estimated that universal statewide adoption of EHRs would cost roughly \$1 billion. The Collaborative is fortunate to have a \$50 million commitment from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts to fund its demonstration project phase. By pooling the resources, talent, and experience of its 34 member organizations and communities throughout the state, the Collaborative hopes to achieve a major leap forward in realizing its vision of better care for the Commonwealth.

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