

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

MASSACHUSETTS STATEWIDE e HEALTH INITIATIVE
TAKES ITS NEXT STEP
Finalist communities announced

Waltham, Mass. – (February 1, 2005) – Six health care communities have been selected as finalists to participate in the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative’s (MaeHC) first demonstration project on the implementation of electronic health records (EHRs) in Massachusetts. The six communities are:

Community	Core hospital system
Boston	Boston Medical Center
Brockton	Brockton Hospital and Good Samaritan Medical Center
Concord	Emerson Hospital
Holyoke	Holyoke Medical Center
Greater Newburyport	Anna Jaques Hospital
Northern Berkshire	North Adams Regional Medical Center

Each community is centered on an acute-care hospital or group of hospitals, and includes many different aspects of the community’s health care delivery system, including physician practices, long-term care facilities, nursing and home health care agencies. They were selected on the basis of the clarity and comprehensiveness of their vision for electronic health records, as well as their potential to provide clear, valuable lessons in how EHRs can be effectively implemented to improve the quality, efficiency, and safety of care in the diversity of health care settings that characterizes Massachusetts. A number of applicants also demonstrated a commitment to building a broad-based community coalition and meeting the needs of the medically underserved.

Within the next four to six weeks, three applicants will be selected from the group of six finalists to embark on a three-year project to demonstrate the effectiveness of various approaches to implementing electronic health records across a spectrum of the health care delivery system.

“We are impressed and humbled by the quantity and quality of responses to our initial request for applications,” said Micky Tripathi, chief executive officer of the MaeHC.

“We received a total of 35 applications, which were extremely sophisticated and well-developed. It’s clear that there are many communities in Massachusetts who are ready for electronic health records; the key question is, how do we most effectively use the pilot projects to educate us about how to best get the whole job done?”

“We have a unique and demanding set of criteria for these pilots, because they will be test laboratories for the rest of the state,” Tripathi continued. “While we would have liked to fund many more programs, the lessons we learn from these three projects will be enormously valuable to developing our understanding of the costs and benefits of widespread use of such technology, and will be shared continuously with the entire health care community in a timely fashion.”

Tripathi said, “Today’s announcement is only the beginning of the beginning. While we will, of course, work closely with the participants in the demonstration project, we intend to be a resource for any community in the state – offering expertise, experience and the tools needed to help all health care professionals serve their patients.”

(more)

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 at least \$1.5 billion. The Collaborative is fortunate to have \$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 participating pilot communities, the Collaborative hopes to achieve a major leap forward in realizing its visions of better care for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

More information on the project, including a copy of the Request for Applications and a further description of the Collaborative, is available at www.maehc.org

Contact:

Micky Tripathi
CEO, Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative
(781) 434-7905
mtripathi@maehc.org

Frank Fortin
Communications Director, Massachusetts Medical Society
(781) 434-7099
ffortin@mms.org

Susan Leahy
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
(617) 246-4823
susan.leahy-schuh@bcbsma.com

###