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March 10, 2009

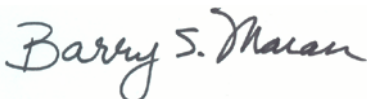
Dear Community Leader,

I am writing to inform you of a new and important grant opportunity from the State of Illinois. On February 4, 2009, Governor Pat Quinn signed Senate Bill 1132 into law, appropriating \$3 million to the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) to establish a program for statewide health information exchange (HIE). Additionally, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 delineates more than \$20 billion in federal funding nationwide for HIE. HFS recognizes the complexity of planning and implementing successful community electronic HIE systems and supports these planning efforts. As a result, HFS will invest this initial \$3 million to fund Health Information Exchange (HIE) Planning Grants in order to leverage as much federal funding for health information exchange as possible when it becomes available. This marks the first significant state investment in HIE, which has long been regarded as a powerful tool to improve the quality of healthcare, reduce medical errors and provide better outcomes for patients.

HFS is soliciting your active participation in the Illinois HIE Planning Grant process. HFS is asking community leaders, from all areas of the state, to inform their communities about the availability of HIE planning grants. The grants will require that stakeholders collaborate in "Medical Trading Areas" (MTA) in Illinois to identify and address regional HIE planning needs. An Illinois MTA is a geographic subdivision of the state that contains a large majority of the health care transactions delivered to the residents of that defined area. For purposes of these planning grants, stakeholders include, but are not limited to, hospitals, practicing clinicians, laboratories, pharmacies, health plans, insurers, local public health departments, quality improvement organizations, and hospital associations. **Only one HIE Planning Grant per MTA will be funded.** Therefore, stakeholders within each area are strongly encouraged to collaborate and submit a proposal that successfully meets Illinois' HIE planning needs. The HFS website (www.hfs.illinois.gov/hie) contains MTA statewide and regional maps along with information about MTA stakeholders.

A formal Request for Grant Applications will be released by HFS on April 1, 2009 and proposals are due on May 15, 2009. Please share this notice with other HIE stakeholders in your community and visit the HFS webpage devoted to HIE at <http://hfs.illinois.gov/hie> for more information and continuous updates.

Sincerely,



Barry S. Maram
Director

A critical time for Health Information Exchange

IN ILLINOIS –

- *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.*

ACROSS THE COUNTRY –

- *The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, signed into law on February 17th, dedicates more than \$20 billion nationwide in federal funding to implement electronic health records and health data exchange by 2014.*

Health Information Exchange in Illinois

Health Information Exchange (HIE) is the use of electronic medical records and e-prescribing to assist medical providers in understanding a patient's full medical history. HIE enables the exchange of clinical and administrative data among providers to:

- Improve healthcare quality and outcomes
- Reduce health disparities
- Reduce medical errors and duplicative services
- Enhance coordination of patient care among providers
- Reduce or eliminate paper
- Control the cost of healthcare

HIE Planning Grants

The HIE planning grants will be the first meaningful step in Illinois toward implementing Health Information Exchange statewide. Fifteen (15) Medical Trading Areas in Illinois have been identified by careful data analysis to address localized planning needs and assure rapid and effective planning for the implementation of HIE projects. The ultimate goal of the planning grants is to secure the commitment of a majority of stakeholder groups (e.g. physicians, hospitals, clinics, etc.) within each Medical Trading Area to participate in a health information exchange that will operate as a component of a state-level health information exchange in the future.

Medical Trading Areas

An Illinois Medical Trading Area is a geographic subdivision of the State based on locations where a majority of people who live in a given area receive health care. The designation of these areas ensures that state planning efforts for health information exchange are based not on theory, but on the needs of real patients and the health care providers they actually go to for services. Only **one** HIE Planning Grant per area will be funded. Therefore, interested organizations within each MTA are encouraged to work together to submit a proposal that successfully meets Illinois' HIE planning needs. A full map of Illinois showing the 15 MTAs, as well as detailed maps of each area, including listings of hospitals and federally qualified health centers, can be found on the Illinois HIE website: <http://hfs.illinois.gov/hie>.

Next Steps

A formal Request for Grant Applications will be released on April 1, 2009 and proposals will be due on May 15, 2009. Eligible applicants must be formal or incorporated organizations, based in Illinois and engaged in not-for-profit or public assistance or related functions. Please share this notice with other healthcare stakeholders in your community and visit the HIE website for more information and ongoing updates.