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Virginia Selected as a Community to Advance Use of Electronic Health Records

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt visited Richmond on June 12th and was joined by Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, Michael Matthews, CEO of MedVirginia, and other distinguished guests in announcing that Virginia will participate in a national Medicare demonstration project that provides incentive payments to physicians for using certified electronic health records (EHR) to improve the quality of patient care.

Over the five-year demonstration project, financial incentives will be provided to as many as 100 primary care physician practices in Virginia that use certified EHRs to improve quality as measured by their performance on specific clinical quality measures.

Mr. Matthews was named in February as the Virginia “Community Convener” by Secretary Leavitt. Subsequently, Mr. Matthews formed a taskforce comprised of healthcare leaders from across the state and led the development of the winning application. Virginia was one of twelve communities selected by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) through a competitive process from a field of more than 30 applicants.

In accepting the award from Secretary Leavitt, Mr. Matthews stated that he was honored and privileged to receive this recognition on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He added that “the evidence is too compelling and the stakes are too high to maintain status quo”. He expressed his appreciation to Secretary Leavitt, Governor Kaine, their administrative staffs, and the General Assembly for their outstanding leadership.

Dr. Richard M. Hamrick III, President of the Medical Society of Virginia, added, “Virginia's physician community recognizes the value these tools have as a vehicle for achieving our aim to deliver the highest quality of patient care. The Medical Society of Virginia stands ready to work with CMS, Governor Kaine, Secretary Tavenner, Secretary Chopra, MedVirginia and the members of this statewide partnership to leverage the potential of this opportunity and enhance the practice of medicine.”

The Demonstration will be implemented in two phases. CMS will begin working with partners in four Phase I communities over the coming months to develop site-specific recruitment strategies, and recruitment of physician practices will start in the fall. For Phase II sites such as Virginia, these activities will begin in the summer of 2009.

MedVirginia will work closely with the Medical Society of Virginia, the Virginia Academy of Family Physicians, CMS and other community partners to promote the availability of the Demonstration to Virginia physicians and encourage their participation.

A copy of the HHS press release may be accessed via this link:

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/06/20080610a.html>



Sec. Michael Leavitt (left) presents the flag and award to Dr. Ed Glynn, Governor Tim Kaine, and Michael Matthews, CEO, MedVirginia.

About MedVirginia

MedVirginia LLC, established in 2000, is a provider-owned organization based in Richmond, VA. Its organizational purpose is to improve quality, safety and efficiency through the use of health information technology. At its core is *MedVirginia SolutionSM*, a community-based health information exchange linking clinical data from physicians, hospitals, labs and pharmacies. In January 2006, MedVirginia's RHIO became operational, making it among the first "live" RHIOs in the U.S. On February 28, 2007 Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced that MedVirginia would receive funding from the Virginia Health Information Technology (HIT) Council for expansion of capabilities. In October, 2007, MedVirginia was awarded a contract with the U.S. Dept. of HHS to participate in the Nationwide Health Information Network Trial Implementation.

For convenient links to the CMS EHR Demonstration website, visit www.MedVirginia.net and click on "CMS EHR Demonstration".

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