



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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State Kicks Off Health Information Exchange Planning Project

Project to Improve Health Care Quality, Safety and Bring in Millions of Federal Dollars

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is hosting summits across the state as a first step in planning and designing a statewide infrastructure and services for Health Information Exchange. A statewide infrastructure will enable Wisconsin to claim its share of \$2 billion set aside in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for implementing health information technology and exchange across the nation. Another \$34 billion in Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments will be available in the ARRA directly to health care providers. Electronic health information improves health care quality and safety, as well as reduces overall costs in the health care system.

“With electronic health records, physicians and patients have access to more reliable information to make important decisions about what treatment is best and safest while protecting a patient’s privacy,” said Secretary Karen Timberlake. “More hospitals and clinics are adopting electronic health records to improve treatment and reduce medical errors. This infrastructure will provide the technology to allow these electronic systems to securely communicate with each other across the state.”

The Health Information Exchange (HIE) initiative will assess, propose, plan and design an infrastructure in Wisconsin. The ultimate goal of the health information technology provisions in the ARRA is for every individual in the U.S. to have an electronic medical record by 2014. Achieving this goal is a key priority of both Governor Jim Doyle and President Barack Obama. The statewide HIE will be an important tool to transforming health care delivery in Wisconsin and promoting health care quality, safety and efficiency. Wisconsin will apply for its share of the \$2 billion set aside in the ARRA for this purpose.

In addition, another \$34 billion in Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments is aimed at helping providers adopt and use certified electronic health records. Health care professionals and hospitals must acquire and use electronic medical records that meet federal standards in order to be eligible for health information technology incentive payments through the ARRA. Records must be connected in a way that allows for a meaningful exchange of a patient’s health information with other providers who care for the patient. Simply having electronic records does not qualify providers for the incentive payments. The planning, design, and implementation of the statewide HIE architecture and infrastructure is an essential next step for Wisconsin.

The Department surveyed clinics statewide in 2008 and found that approximately 79% of office-based physicians are currently using or are in the process of implementing electronic health records. With a fully integrated statewide health network, a physician treating a person from Kenosha who becomes ill in Bayfield could have the person’s medical records, lab tests, x-rays or CT scans sent electronically from their home clinic to Bayfield with the click of a button.

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In July, the Department will hold five regional HIE summit meetings across the state with the health care community to gain stakeholder input. Health care organizations, associations and insurers; hospitals; physicians; health care providers; consumers; state and local government representatives; and Tribal Government representatives are encouraged to attend. The purpose of the summits is to identify and assess common interests, requirements and priorities.

Below is the HIE summit schedule:

APPLETON	SAUK CITY	SUPERIOR	MILWAUKEE	MARSHFIELD
Wednesday, July 1	Tuesday, July 7	Thursday, July 9	Tuesday, July 14	Thursday, July 16
Venue: City Center	Venue: Rural WI	Venue: UW-Superior	Venue: Medical College	Venue: Marshfield Clinic
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	Health Cooperative	8:00 am – 12:00 pm	of Wisconsin	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
	8:30 am – 12:30 pm		8:00 am – 12:00 pm	

For more information about the HIE project and summit meetings, go to:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/eHealth/HIE/index.htm>

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