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Tri-State Regional Extension Center Reaches 100% Enrollment Goal

Center is helping more than 1,700 physicians use technology to improve patient care

Cincinnati, OH – The Tri-State Regional Extension Center (REC) announced today that it has met its enrollment goal of 1,739 primary care providers in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. By enrolling with the REC each provider will receive help in implementing an electronic health record (EHR) system and meeting requirements for significant incentive payments.

“We are very proud of our work to date,” said David Groves, Executive Director of the Tri-State REC. “HealthBridge and its partners are uniquely positioned to help health care providers make dramatic improvements in the use and effectiveness of health information technology in primary care settings. EHRs are critical to better patient care because they improve clinical documentation, decision making, and care coordination.”

EHRs enable health care providers to have instant access to vital information about a patient’s medical history in order to diagnose health problems earlier, provide proactive treatments, and improve patient outcomes. These technologies can help lower healthcare system costs by eliminating unnecessary or duplicative tests, reducing errors and improving clinical decision-making. EHRs can also improve communication between health care providers, including referrals between primary care providers and specialists.

On January 3, 2011, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology announced the availability of the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record Incentive Programs. Through these programs, eligible health care providers who demonstrate meaningful use of EHRs can receive as much as \$44,000 over a five-year period through Medicare or \$63,750 over six years through Medicaid.

The Tri-State REC is working with providers to attest for the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. Tri-State REC practices that receive federal incentive payments for meaningful use of health information technology could bring in more than \$75 million in additional federal funding for the tri-state region.

“Our electronic medical record is providing us with information we can use to improve how we care for and communicate with our patients,” said Dr. Molly Katz of Katz and Kade, Inc., a gynecologic practice in Cincinnati. “We are excited to understand how what we recommend and do for our patients improves their health and achieves better outcomes.”

The Tri-State REC was designated by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology (ONC) as one of 62 Regional Extension Centers (RECs) established across the nation. The REC program was established by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical (HITECH) Act to help health care providers transition to EHRs and

achieve federal meaningful use guidelines to maximize the functionality and benefits of an EHR system.

"We appreciate the support that the Tri-State Regional Extension Center has offered the primary care providers in our area," said Dr. Katz. "The more clinicians are on board (and online!), the better the data, the health of our patients and the health system in general will be."

The Tri-State REC is a collaborative partnership among some of the region's most highly regarded health information organizations. HealthBridge is the prime recipient of the REC grant and works closely with HealthLINC (Bloomington, Indiana), NeKY RHIO (Morehead, Kentucky), CCHIE (Springfield, Ohio) and the University of Kentucky to help providers achieve the maximum benefits of electronic health records systems in their medical practices.

For additional information about Regional Extension Centers, visit the [HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT](#). For more information on the Electronic Health Records Incentive Program, please visit the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services website, <https://www.cms.gov/ehrincentiveprograms/>.

About the Tri-State REC

The Tri-State REC was established in early 2010 through a \$10.1 million federal grant awarded to HealthBridge. The goal of the Tri-State REC is to help more than 1,700 physicians adopt, implement and meaningfully use electronic health records. Federal funding is available under the economic stimulus bill for physicians who use health IT to improve patient care. The Tri-State REC serves 67 counties in southwestern Ohio, northern and northeastern Kentucky, and south-central Indiana. The Tri-State REC is a collaborative effort involving HealthBridge, the University of Kentucky, Collaborating Communities Health Information Exchange, HealthLINC, and the Northeast Kentucky Regional Health Information Organization. For more information about the Tri-State REC, please visit www.tristaterec.org.

About HealthBridge

Founded in 1997, HealthBridge started as a regional effort to improve health care quality, by sharing health information electronically in the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky tri-state area. Today, HealthBridge is recognized as one of the nation's largest, most advanced and most financially sustainable health information exchanges (HIE). HealthBridge's innovative information network has grown to encompass more than 50 hospitals, 800 physician practices and 7,500 physicians in five different communities in three states. HealthBridge's secure electronic network sends roughly 3.2 million electronic messages per month, including clinical lab tests, radiology reports, discharge summaries and other information vital to better care for more than 2.5 million patients.

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Additional Resources

HealthIT.gov

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