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For Immediate Release

LOUISIANA HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE CENTER REACHES GOAL 1,042 Priority Primary Care Providers Enroll Statewide

Baton Rouge, LA – Jan. 3, 2012 – The Louisiana Health Information Technology (LHIT) Resource Center has reached its initial goal of enrolling 1,042 priority primary care providers in the state, as part of the national effort to accelerate the adoption of electronic health records (EHRs). In November 2011, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) announced that the country’s network of 62 Regional Extension Centers (RECs) had achieved a national enrollment of 100,000 primary care providers, committed to adopting EHRs in a meaningful way.

“Louisiana has made great strides toward an electronically-enabled health care system, and the LHIT Resource Center has played an important role by supporting providers as they transition from paper-based systems,” said Cindy Munn, Executive Director of the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum. “This milestone demonstrates the dedication of our clinicians to improve the quality and delivery of health care through EHRs.”

EHRs enable health care providers to have ready 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 health care system costs by eliminating unnecessary or duplicative tests, reducing errors and improving clinical decision-making. EHRs can also improve communication between providers, including referrals between primary care providers and specialists.

“EHRs will revolutionize the way health care is delivered in the U.S. by providing physicians with more information about their patients, which will in turn help them make better treatment decisions,” said Nadine Robin, LHIT Resource Program Manager. “In addition to reaching our target goal, we have enrolled nearly 200 other physicians, many of whom are specialists. By accelerating the EHR adoption rate and other health information technologies, the Resource Center is helping clinicians provide safer, higher-quality care for patients in Louisiana.”

The REC program was established by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to help health care providers transition to electronic health records and achieve federal meaningful use guidelines to maximize the functionality and benefits of an EHR system. Though the LHIT Resource Center has met its initial program enrollment goal, it continues to offer technical assistance, guidance and information to support and accelerate health care providers’ efforts to adopt and meaningfully use EHRs.

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Since launching Parish Internal Medicine Associates of Destrehan, La. in 2004, Kiran Chava, MD, has been mindful about EHR implementation. “I began the conversion from paper to EHRs in anticipation that this was the direction that clinical practices were heading. I’ve already seen my practice become more efficient. My office manager and the LHIT Resource Center specialist worked together with our EHR vendor so that we could successfully achieve meaningful use. What we did in an afternoon probably would’ve taken several weeks for us to do alone.”

“EHRs are the future of patient care. Whether providers are eligible for the incentive programs or not, the LHIT Resource Center stands ready to help them adopt this new technology and use it to its fullest potential,” stated Robin.

Providers seeking more information about implementing an EHR system are encouraged to contact the LHIT Resource Center at rec@lhcf.org.

About the Louisiana Health Information Technology (LHIT) Resource Center

The LHIT Resource Center was awarded through an objective review process by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), as the designated organization in Louisiana to support primary health care providers on EHR adoption and meaningful use. Administered by the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum, the Resource Center’s services include assistance with EHR vendor selection, project management, workflow redesign and meaningful use achievement. All Louisiana health care providers are eligible for the services; grant subsidies are available for certain primary care providers. If you are a provider or represent a critical access/rural hospital and would like more information, please email rec@lhcf.org.

About the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum is a private, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to advancing evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of Louisiana residents. Its main areas of focus include quality measurement and analytics, clinical quality improvement, the patient-centered medical home/care coordination model, outreach/education and health information technology. The Forum is the State-Designated Entity to support Louisiana’s health care providers and critical access/rural hospitals as they adopt and meaningfully use electronic health records and to lead the planning and implementation of the state’s health information exchange. For more information about the LHIT Resource Center and the Forum, visit www.lhcf.org.

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