
NEWS RELEASE

For Release: July 21, 2004
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Hudson Valley physician organization earns national recognition for technology initiative

Fishkill, N.Y. -- The Taconic IPA, a 2,300-member physician independent practice association (IPA) is being recognized nationally for its effort in successfully applying information technology to Hudson Valley health care - improving patient safety, health care quality and efficiency through the development of a patient electronic medical record. The IPA region includes Columbia, Greene, Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Rockland and Putnam counties. Participating organizations include Benedictine Hospital, Kingston Hospital, LabCorp, MVP Health Care and Vassar Brothers Medical Center.

The Foundation for eHealth Initiative (eHI) has selected The Taconic IPA's Taconic Health Information Network and Community (THINC) as one of nine initiatives nationwide that are being awarded funding, collectively totaling over \$2 million, through the Connecting Communities for Better Health (CCBH) program to pursue local projects in electronic health information exchange.

Announcements were made as part of the National Health Infrastructure Initiative 2004 *Cornerstones for Electronic Healthcare* Conference in Washington, D.C. by the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and National Health Information Technology Coordinator Dr. David Brailer, MD, PhD.

THINC, a multi-stakeholder, community-wide, medical data exchange is funded, in part, by Taconic Education and Research Fund, Inc. (TERF). TERF's function is to organize, coordinate and sponsor educational activities and programs for health care providers in the community in order to increase their knowledge base and expand on the existing educational programs currently available.

"The Taconic IPA was able to create a true community among the major health care organizations - in a region that has more traditionally been competitive," said A. John Blair, president and CEO of the Taconic IPA and the project director of THINC. "Through the use of Axolotl's technology, our region is one of the first where physicians,

hospitals laboratories, pharmacies, health insurers and employers are connected and sharing clinical data. By working together we are revolutionizing health care and developing an electronic medical record system that is improving the health care of our patients," he said.

The CCBH program is funded through a cooperative agreement with the Health Resources and Services Administration Office for the Advancement of Telehealth. The goal of CCBH is to implement activities on a national, regional and local basis that will lay the foundation for an interconnected, electronic, standards-based health information infrastructure to support patients, clinicians and those responsible for population health.

The electronic medical record, in which all of a patient's medical and health information is accessible to any physician treating the patient, is widely viewed by national health care experts as vital to efforts to improve patient safety and health care quality.

Janet M. Marchibroda, Executive Director of the Foundation for eHealth Initiative added, "the CCBH awards are historic because they represent 'a first' in collaboration between the public and private sectors to support electronic health information exchange at the community level. There is strong and growing support amongst all healthcare stakeholders—both within the public and private sectors--for transforming our healthcare system from a paper-based enterprise to a modern, electronic model."

"The recognition we received at the Cornerstones conference and the grant awarded by the eHealth Initiative to support our project, demonstrate that our region is now at the cutting edge of this most important effort to modernize health care," Blair said.

The group plans to use the grant to support its effort to expand the electronic health care data exchange program throughout the Hudson Valley by obtaining the full participation of the remaining hospitals and laboratories in the region.

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