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In the News.....IT Healthcare

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In anticipation of 2014, when the entire US healthcare industry is expected to be on Electronic Healthcare Records (EHRs), the US Government continues to stimulate systems for the "exchange" of such information from one provider to another. Though this clearly is a great plan and it is likely that all US states will have pilot programs in place by the end of 2012, we remain of the opinion that PWeR® as patented (pending) would make such exchanges theoretically obsolete, as their system instantaneously allows providers to see the same information from multiple users and make actual "transmission" of medical files across the Internet 20th century technology. We relate it to the use of "pay phones" in the era of mobile phones.

ONC Starts Direct Project Pilots in Minnesota and Rhode Island

The Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health IT has launched in Minnesota and Rhode Island the first pilot demonstrations of the Direct Project for simple electronic health information exchanges.¹

Direct Project Details

The Direct Project is a streamlined version of the Nationwide Health Information Network and is designed to help healthcare providers with limited resources meet criteria for the meaningful use program. Under the 2009 economic stimulus package, health care providers who demonstrate meaningful use of certified electronic health records can qualify for Medicaid and Medicare incentive payments.

National Coordinator for Health IT David Blumenthal said the Direct Project is "part of the escalator for exchange and interoperability, which is part of the overall escalator for meaningful use."

Current Pilots

Arien Malec, coordinator of the Direct Project, said Hennepin County Medical Center in Minnesota has begun sending immunization records to the Minnesota Department of Health through health information services provider VisionShare.

The Rhode Island Quality Institute established a health information exchange with members of the Rhode Island Primary Care Physicians Corp. and Polaris Medical Management. The institute also will send clinical information from practice-based EHRs to the statewide health information exchange Currentcare.

Future Programs in the Works

Malec said later this month, pilot programs under the Direct Project will launch in California, New York and Tennessee. He added that Connecticut and Texas will launch pilots later this year.²

¹ McKinney, *Modern Healthcare*, 2/2

² Mosquera, *Government Health IT*, 2/2