



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF e-HEALTH INITIATIVES

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## OFFICE OF E-HEALTH INITIATIVES JOINS NEW STATEWIDE ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION PARTNERSHIP Not-for-profit will contribute to development of statewide strategic health information exchange plan

NASHVILLE - Tennesseans can expect the broader accessibility and secure exchange of electronic health information with the creation of a new not-for-profit organization of Tennessee health care leaders and organizations.

The Health Information Partnership for Tennessee (HIP TN), the new not-for-profit, is a public-private entity that brings together the state's local, regional and state electronic health information initiatives and resources into a collaborative partnership and framework. HIP TN will work to improve access to health information so health care providers and consumers can make better, more informed health care decisions.

"We have reached another milestone in the evolution of electronic health information exchange in Tennessee," said Bob Gordon, Mid-South eHealth Alliance board member and HIP TN chair. "Our state has received national recognition for leadership in electronic health information and for our regional health information initiatives. HIP TN is another example of just how dedicated our state's forward-thinking health care providers and stakeholders are to Tennessee's progress in electronic health information."

The Office of e-Health Initiatives will support HIP TN's efforts as Commissioner Dave Goetz, Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration joins the partnership's board of directors with Melissa Hargiss, director of the Office of e-Health Initiatives, serving HIP TN in an ex-officio capacity.

"HIP TN wants to advance the exchange of health information between providers to make sure patients receive well-coordinated care, thereby improving quality and cost efficiencies, no matter the setting or level of care," Hargiss said. "One of the key objectives on which HIP TN will focus is security and privacy for consumers and health care providers, making sure a patient's confidential information is protected and shared with providers only in a secure manner."

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*Better Health Information for Better Health for Tennesseans*

HIP TN representatives met recently in Nashville to finalize board of director members and to organize the various workgroups that will work with Tennessee's Department of Finance and Administration and Office of e-Health Initiatives in developing a statewide, strategic health information exchange plan.

When finalized, HIP TN will approve the plan the Office of e-Health will submit to the U.S. Health and Human Service Department's Office of National Coordinator (ONC), the federal agency with oversight of the health information technology portions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The plan will be Tennessee's application to draw federal stimulus funds for health information exchange.

ARRA includes approximately \$2 billion in funding opportunities for health information technology, including \$500 million for regional health information exchange initiatives.

HIP TN's workgroups will help with the plan's components of governance, clinical objectives, privacy and security, technical architecture, health information technology adoption, consumer education, evaluation and financing.

"Within the next six, we expect to receive the individual workgroup recommendations, which will be compiled into the state's master strategic plan for submission to ONC," Gordon said.

HIP TN's board of directors includes 10 members from the private sector and two representatives of the public sector. HIP TN's board members are:

- Reginald Coopwood, M.D., chief executive officer, Metropolitan Nashville Hospital Authority;
- Robert S. Gordon, executive vice president and chief administrative officer, Baptist Memorial Health Care and former chairman of the board, Mid-South eHealth Alliance;
- Dave Goetz, commissioner, Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration;
- Veronica Gunn, M.D., chief medical officer, Tennessee Department of Health;
- Robert H. McLaughlin, M.D., medical senior director, CIGNA Healthcare;
- Robert J. Mandel, M.D., senior vice president for Health Care Services, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee;
- B. W. Ruffner, M.D., president-elect, Tennessee Medical Association;
- David H. Sensibaugh, director, Integrated Health, Eastman Chemical Company;
- Richard H. Sain, Pharm. D., president, Reeves-Sain Drug Store and past president, Tennessee Pharmacists Association;
- E. Douglas Varney, president and chief executive officer, Frontier Health and chairman of the board, CareSpark, Inc.; and
- Patrick Willard, associate state director, Advocacy, AARP Tennessee.

Mark Bengel, chief information officer, Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration and Hargiss are ex-officio HIP TN board members.

The creation of HIP TN began earlier this year when the state of Tennessee's Office of e-Health Initiatives engaged Manatt, Phelps & Phillips and its health care advisory and consulting division, Manatt Health Solutions, to assess how Tennessee should align its electronic health information resources to maximize ARRA funding opportunities, and to further leverage and sustain its electronic health strengths for Tennessee's overall health care needs.

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Mannatt produced a comprehensive report, *Advancing Statewide eHealth Efforts*, which the firm presented during an all-day meeting in June to more than 60 health care stakeholders from across Tennessee. A copy of the report is available at [www.tn.gov/ehealth](http://www.tn.gov/ehealth), under the link HIP TN.

The stakeholders agreed on the report's finding that the health care needs of all Tennesseans would be well-served with the creation of a not-for-profit entity charged with coordinating statewide electronic health initiatives.

A 10-member group of public sector health care stakeholders formed a steering committee, along with three public sector representatives, to establish the not-for-profit organization, which became HIP TN, and recommend members for the organization's board of directors.

"We've established a number of action principles," Hargiss said. "Health information technology by itself won't transform the delivery of health care. It will be the people using the technology who will make a difference."

For more information, visit [www.tn.gov/ehealth](http://www.tn.gov/ehealth) and click the HIP TN link.

#### **About the Office of e-Health Initiatives**

The Office of e-Health Initiatives is the single coordinating authority for the exchange of electronic health information in Tennessee and works to improve the health of Tennesseans by ensuring providers have complete patient information at the point of care. For more information on the Office of e-Health Initiatives, visit [www.tn.gov/ehealth](http://www.tn.gov/ehealth).

#### **About the Health Information Partnership for Tennessee**

The Health Information Partnership for Tennessee (HIP TN) seeks to improve the health of people served in Tennessee using a public-private framework to coordinate and empower the sharing of appropriate health information through local and regional Health Information Exchanges, as well as in areas not yet covered by an exchange, thereby improving quality, coordination of care, cost efficiency and public health.

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