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**HEALTH IT TESTING PROGRAM WILL ENABLE HEALTH DATA SHARING
FOR MORE THAN HALF OF U.S. PATIENTS AND THEIR PROVIDERS**

Public-Private Partnership Selects CCHIT as Compliance Testing Body

NEW YORK – October 11, 2012 – More than half the U.S. population and their health care providers could soon have access to health data shared across multiple states and systems. A public-private partnership of states, public agencies, federally-funded health information exchanges (HIEs) and health information technology (HIT) companies has established a program to test and certify electronic health records (EHRs) and other health IT to enable reliable transfer of data within and across organizational and state boundaries.

High costs, technical differences and long wait times for interface development are barriers to sharing health data among health care providers and across state lines. The coalition of 15 states, 37 technology vendors and 34 HIEs, representing more than 50 percent of the U.S. population, has created a robust, highly automated testing program to verify that, once tested, a system is capable of exchanging health information with many other systems. With this testing, a single set of standardized, easy-to-implement connections can support communication among systems.

The effort is being jointly led by the EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup, a New York eHealth Collaborative (NYeC)–led consortium of states and vendors; and Healtheway, the newly formed public-private partnership of the eHealth Exchange, a network of 34 public and private organizations representing hundreds of hospitals, thousands of providers and millions of patients across the country.

This effort will build on and accelerate consensus on national standards, adopting EHR certification criteria and testing procedures as relevant and finalized for Stage 2 of meaningful use. Members of both groups will continue to provide feedback from these real-world implementations to the national health IT standard setting initiatives established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).

"Today's announcement brings together several activities supported by ONC over the past years: a core set of national standards, an Accredited Certification Body, the Public-private partnership that has emerged from the Nationwide Health Information Network Exchange, and the convening power of New

York and other State Health Information Exchange grantees," said Dr. Farzad Mostashari, the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. "We look forward to working with this consortium to continue progress on interoperability and secure health information exchange, and to reflect what is learned in national standards as necessary."

The coalition selected the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT), the most experienced HIT certification organization in the U.S., to carry out the testing. As the compliance testing body, CCHIT will certify that the interfaces between the HIT and HIEs are consistent across multiple states and systems. CCHIT is also an Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) authorized certification body and is an accredited testing laboratory for EHRs. CCHIT is collaborating with AEGIS.net on the testing software, which is being developed under an open source license.

"The collaboration between the states and vendors to address a shared marketplace gap and work toward a mutual vision has been one of the remarkable aspects of this effort," said David Whitlinger, Executive Director of NYeC. "And momentum is building within both communities as states grow their HIE networks by working with the EHR and HIE vendors to provide seamless integration and clinical workflow, taking the market to a new level for the benefit of patients."

"The testing program Healthway has developed with NYeC is the key to realizing secure and interoperable exchange of health information across organizational and geographic boundaries," said Michael Matthews, Healthway President and Board Chair. "The launch of a compliance testing program will enable the eHealth Exchange to more than double participation and connectivity over the next 9 to 12 months."

Realizing that merging efforts with other states would create economies of scale and provide the vendor community with a single, consistent set of specifications, NYeC created the EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup last year. Over the course of 18 months, the group has developed technical and test specifications to address the major use cases of interoperable exchange. Around the same time, plans took shape to transition the NwHIN Exchange to function outside the federal government as a public-private network, now called the eHealth Exchange. To expand nationwide HIE, Healthway and NYeC formed a strategic partnership to enable technology systems, public and private providers and health information organizations (HIOs) to have access to more efficient testing.

The coalition harmonized a set of functional, technical and test specifications that enable true plug and play connectivity to simplify EHR and HIE development. The coalition's work covers the ability to send and receive encrypted health information over the Internet, lookup and retrieve patient records, and

produce a tightly constrained patient record summary which reduces variances and implementation-specific customization. These capabilities will allow providers to meet their goals for coordinating patient care.

Vendors have agreed to bring their products for testing according to these specifications and participating states have agreed to promote the value of EHR and HIE products certified in the program. This program will ensure that providers' EHR software has the capability to connect to their local HIE and enable communities and states to share patient health information.

"This project is a perfect fit for our public mission as a non-profit certification organization," said Alisa Ray, CCHIT's Executive Director. "Our experience in preparing organizations to certify products, coupled with the availability of highly automated testing, will help health IT companies get their technology to market quickly and prepare provider and HIE participants to share information more efficiently."

Coalition members will announce plans for launching the program and more details at the NYeC Digital Health Conference, Oct. 15-16, and webinars will be scheduled for the HIT and provider communities. More details and a fact sheet is available at www.hiehitnews.org.

About NYeC

NYeC is a not-for-profit organization, working to improve healthcare for all New Yorkers through health information technology (health IT). Founded in 2006 by healthcare leaders, NYeC receives funding from state and federal grants to serve as the focal point for health IT in the State of New York. NYeC works to develop policies and standards, to assist healthcare providers in making the shift to electronic health records, and to coordinate the creation of a network to connect healthcare providers statewide. The goal of NYeC is that no patient, wherever they may need treatment within the State of New York, is ever without fast, secure, accurate, and accessible information. For more information about NYeC, visit www.nyehealth.org. @NYeHealth on Twitter.

About the EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup

The EHR | HIE Interoperability Workgroup is a New York eHealth Collaborative-led coalition of 15 States (representing nearly 50% of the U.S. population), 19 electronic health record (EHR) vendors, and 18 health information exchange (HIE vendors). The workgroup was launched in February 2011 to leverage existing standards and develop consistent implementation guides for interoperability between HIE software platforms, and the applications that interface with them. For more information about the Workgroup, visit www.interopwg.org.

About Healthway

Healthway is a non-profit organization chartered to operationally support the eHealth Exchange, formerly the Nationwide Health Information Network (NwHIN) Exchange, as it transitioned from the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) initiative to a public-private endeavor. Healthway leads in cross-industry collaboration to develop implementation strategies that enable secure, interoperable nationwide exchange of health information.

The eHealth Exchange is a rapidly growing community of exchange partners, who share information under a common trust framework and a common set of rules. Currently, 34 participants include 4 federal agencies, 5 states, 8 beacon communities and more than a dozen Health Information Organizations (HIOs) and health systems, which represent hundreds of hospitals, thousands of providers and millions of patients. The eHealth Exchange helps to improve the health and welfare of all Americans through health information exchange that is trusted, scalable and enhances quality of care and health outcomes by supporting comprehensive longitudinal health records.

For more information about Healthway and the eHealth Exchange: www.healthwayinc.org

About CCHIT

The Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT®) is an independent, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the public mission of accelerating the adoption of robust, interoperable health information technology. The Commission has been certifying electronic health record technology since 2006 and is authorized by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a certification body (ONC-ACB). CCHIT is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a certification body for the ONC HIT Certification Program for electronic health record (EHR) technology and accredited by the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as an Accredited Testing Laboratory (ATL) to test EHRs. More information on CCHIT is available at <http://cchit.org>.

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