The Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative announces a key milestone for the North Adams health information exchange

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Boston – The Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative (MAeHC) announces that the North Adams eHX (electronic health exchange), one of three health information exchanges in the MAeHC electronic health record pilot program, has reached a key milestone. More than 25,000 patients have consented to having their information shared in the eHX. This represents a consent rate of 94% of all patients who have been asked to participate.

More than 50 physicians in 14 practices in the North Adams region are using the eHX, which was developed by eClinicalWorks of Westborough, Mass. “We’re very excited about the success of the eHX and the rapid adoption by the pilot practices,” says Dave Delano, director of information technology for the Northern Berkshire Health System. “We’re confident that providing secure access to real-time, shared clinical information at the point of care will improve patient safety and clinical outcomes.”

In August 2006, North Adams practices in the MAeHC pilot program began using electronic health records, and in September 2006, practices began receiving laboratory and radiology results electronically. The eHX, which went live in May 2007, allows clinicians at practices and at North Adams Regional Hospital to access eHealth Summaries, which include lists of medical problems, medications, allergies, test results, and other vital information about a patient’s health.

Physicians are already realizing the benefits of the eHX. Dr. Stephen St. Clair, a urologist in North Adams, likes the fact that he can see a summary of diagnoses and medications from other providers who are caring for his patients. “Many patients have no idea which medications they are taking and at what doses,” he claims. “Avoiding side effects and cross reactions has a huge impact on patient safety and quality of care.”

MAeHC president and CEO Micky Tripathi is pleased that the North Adams opt-in rate is so high. “This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the leaders from physician offices, the hospital, and the community who have been working with us in
North Adams,” he states. “By helping to build a system that their patients trust, they have made it possible for the entire community to benefit from better and more efficient care.”

This summer, MAeHC expects to roll out additional eHX functionality in North Adams, including a patient portal (which will give patients online access to information about their healthcare) and ambulatory electronic lab ordering.

The Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative was formed in 2004 as an initiative of the physician community to bring together the state’s major health care stakeholders for the purpose of establishing an EHR system that would enhance the quality, efficiency, and safety of care in Massachusetts. MAeHC endeavors to transform the delivery of health care using electronic health records and health information exchange. In partnership with its three pilot communities and thirty-four member organizations, MAeHC is fostering rapid widespread adoption of these systems. To learn more about the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative, please visit www.maehc.org.

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