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VHQC Awarded Grant to Accelerate Electronic Health Records Adoption

"Extension Center" Will Assist Primary Care Physicians

[Richmond, VA] – VHQC, a healthcare consulting firm and the federally designated Quality Improvement Organization for Virginia, in partnership with the Center for Innovative Technology, Community Care Network of Virginia and the Medical Society of Virginia, today announced the receipt of a two-year, $12.4 million grant. The funding from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, will support a statewide Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center.

Virginia's Center is among the first 32 in the country to be funded as part of the Federal Government's commitment to accelerating the adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs). The Center will provide low-cost access to EHR systems and related technical support to approximately 2,300 primary care physicians across the Commonwealth (including pediatricians and obstetricians/gynecologists). The terms of the grant require the Center initially to focus its efforts on practices of 10 or fewer physicians, physician assistants, and/or nurse practitioners that serve disadvantaged populations.

"Primary care physicians in individual or small group practices deliver the majority of primary care services, but have the lowest rates of EHR adoption," said VHQC President and CEO Donald A. Glozer, MHA, CHE. "Our goal is to help these physicians obtain EHRs as well as make the EHR an integral part of delivering care, which will improve health quality and patient safety."

Physicians who meet the Department of Health and Human Services' standards for "meaningful use" of EHRs can qualify for Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments, and avoid future penalties. The Center's services include direct, individualized and on-site technical assistance in selecting a certified EHR that offers best value for the physicians' needs; achieving effective implementation of a certified EHR; enhancing clinical and administrative workflows to optimally leverage an EHR system's potential to improve quality and value of care, including patient experience as well as outcome of care; and observing and complying with applicable legal, regulatory, professional and ethical requirements to protect the integrity, privacy and security of patients' health information.

A wide range of Virginia healthcare stakeholders supported the successful grant application, including the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Community College System; the Virginia chapters of the American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Healthcare Information Management and Systems Society; the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association, Community Healthcare Association, Rural Health Association, and Association of Health Plans; the Virginia Health Care Foundation; Virginia Commonwealth University Health

System; University of Virginia Health System; Commonwealth Rx; CareSpark; Northern Virginia Regional Health Information Organization and MedVirginia.

The Center now is enrolling primary care physician practices and hiring additional staff to provide technical assistance. For more information on Virginia's Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center or VHQC, please visit www.vhqc.org.

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