



**Press Release –
Addendum Information and Quotes from Stakeholders**

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**PROJECT TO CREATE ELECTRONIC LINKS AMONG AREA
EMERGENCY ROOMS AND COMMUNITY CLINICS**

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About Wisconsin Health Information Exchange (WHIE)

WHIE was established by the non-profit National Institute for Medical Informatics two years ago. WHIE has received previous funding from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration and the State of Wisconsin Division of Public Health to plan for the ED Linking system. WHIE is now receiving funds through a Medicaid transformation grant to implement the linking system. With input from regional hospitals, clinics, insurance companies, state and regional government and public health officials, and other stakeholders, WHIE has created a governance structure and established policies and procedures for secure data exchange among health care providers.

The ED Linking system will be compliant with all federal and state regulations and will include a robust security environment to ensure confidentiality of all individual patient medical records. The type of information being exchanged has been shown to improve quality of care and decrease costs in other cities. It is expected to reduce redundancy of testing and decrease frequency of medical errors. Summary information that does not include patient identifiers will also be used to assist public health officials in detecting disease trends and to identify outbreaks.

Dr. Edward Barthell, emergency physician and co-founder of WHIE, states, "We are excited to be part of a public-private partnership to implement state of the art health information technology to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of healthcare in Wisconsin. This project establishes our region as a national leader in this field."

For additional information see www.whie.org



About the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership

The Partnership is a public-private collaborative to improve health care for the medically underserved in Milwaukee County. This emerging consortium has a governing board currently including the CEOs of Aurora Health Care, Columbia-St. Mary's Hospitals, Children's Hospital and Health Systems, Froedtert and Community Health, and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, the presidents of the four Milwaukee County Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the Director of Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, and the Director of Milwaukee County Division of Administrative Services.

The ED Linking project was initially conceptualized by the Emergency Department Care Coordination Committee (EDCCC) led by the Wisconsin Hospital Association and now commissioned by the Milwaukee Healthcare Partnership.

Bill Bazan, VP of the Wisconsin Hospital Association, states, "We are thrilled that our early planning efforts are now paying off and will result in the implementation of new technology that will help patients get better care."

Leo Brideau, CEO of Columbia St. Marys and Chair of the Milwaukee Health Partnership, states, "The WHIE regional information exchange is an important tool that will provide us with the underlying technical ability to pursue our Partnership objectives to improve quality and efficiency of care in Milwaukee."

About the Wisconsin eHealth Plan

Governor Jim Doyle created the eHealth Care Quality and Patient Safety Board by Executive Order 129 on November 2, 2005. Its purpose was to develop a strategic Action Plan for the statewide adoption and exchange of electronic health records in five years. In response, the Board worked intensively to develop the *eHealth Action Plan*, providing a roadmap for public-private partnerships to advance adoption of electronic health records and the exchange of health information in Wisconsin. On December 1, 2006, the *eHealth Action Plan* was delivered to the Governor.

"Our Department is working to implement Governor's Doyle's eHealth Initiative where private and public sectors come together to improve patient care," said Department of Health and Family Services Secretary Kevin R. Hayden. "Milwaukee's health information exchange initiative is an important step toward reducing medical errors, improving health care quality, and decreasing medical costs for our taxpayers."

For additional information see www.ehealthboard.dhfs.wisconsin.gov

About Microsoft and Azyxxi

Microsoft, the world's largest software company, has a mission to help people reach their potential. Microsoft acquired Azyxxi in August 2006. Azyxxi is a unified health enterprise platform that aggregates and enables analysis of all relevant data, from



across an organization's existing systems, for one, nearly instantaneous view. Customized and timely access to data that spans clinical, financial and administrative systems, enables healthcare workers to maximize the value of information and make the most informed decisions.

Mr. Tom Poole, Sales Director in Microsoft's Health Solutions Group, states, "Getting patient information into the hands of clinicians as quickly as possible, and in ways that support their needs and their patients' needs, is one of the most difficult problems facing healthcare institutions. By partnering with the Wisconsin Health Information Exchange to integrate Azyxxi's unifying technology, we will enable participating organizations to provide their clinicians with the best available data to improve patient care."

For additional information see www.azyxxi.com

About Public Health and ED Linking

The WHIE ED Linking project will provide de-identified data to public health authorities to monitor for emerging patterns of illness or injury. This part of the project will be based on standards developed by the national project called the Health Information Technology Standards Panel funded by the federal Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

Dr. Bevan Baker, Milwaukee Health Commissioner, states, "Reducing health care costs and improving public health are critical to keeping Milwaukee a competitive and healthy city in which to live and work. The Emergency Department Linking Project can reduce costs by providing doctors timely information to prevent medical injuries and redundant, expensive procedures. It will also speed health officials' detection and response to disease outbreaks [like the 1993 cryptosporidium epidemic or pandemic influenza]. Projects like the Emergency Department Linking Project keep Milwaukee's health care systems on the leading edge."

About Clinical Care and ED Linking

Dr. John Whitcomb, Medical Director of the emergency department at Aurora Mt. Sinai, states, "Most emergency doctors can provide tragic stories where optimal care was difficult or impossible to provide because needed data was trapped in some system at another facility across town and wasn't immediately available. We can all go across the world and still withdraw funds from our bank accounts through electronic systems, it is exciting to think we are finally arriving at a stage where we can apply this type of advanced technology to our health care system to help us save lives and decrease costs to society."
