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HHS Awards AHIMA Foundation \$1.2M for State-Level Health Information Exchange Consensus Project

CHICAGO—The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has awarded the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Foundation a one-year, \$1.2 million grant to continue the State-level Health Information Exchange (SL-HIE) Consensus Project to actively assist states with nationwide health information exchange (HIE) adoption, planning and implementation. This supports the opportunities presented by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to advance HIE development in a way that has a positive impact on healthcare.

Within ARRA's new health information technology agenda, states will play a pivotal role in creating and implementing health IT plans, directing resources, and ensuring HIE investments yield improvements in the quality, safety and efficiency of healthcare. The health IT provisions of ARRA will require states to align resources, manage implementation and coordinate activities amidst an array of new programs and obligations. The Consensus Project will continue to provide practical, field-based strategies and practices combined with consensus-based solutions to nationally advance HIE adoption, implementation and use to improve quality and increase systemic efficiencies.

"In preparation to respond to ARRA's HITECH Act [Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act], states are being challenged to achieve and demonstrate value and impact from HIE to improve health and healthcare delivery," said Mary Madison, executive director of the AHIMA Foundation. "The Consensus Project will continue to provide practical and field-based resources to support this work."

The Consensus Project has been sponsored by ONC and managed by the AHIMA Foundation since 2006. The Consensus Project is led by a 13-member steering committee of SL-HIE leaders and it supports a SL-HIE Leadership Forum—open to all states—in which public and private sector HIE leaders can participate, learn, and receive technical support to help foster their implementation of practical and effective HIE.

To ensure resources are effectively and efficiently deployed, states will need comprehensive strategies and best practices that take into account the complex challenges of advancing interoperability and serve the collective needs of all stakeholders.

The strategic priorities for the Consensus Project are to:

- Expand the knowledge base regarding effective HIE and SL-HIE governance, organizational effectiveness, and sustainability of SL-HIE efforts in the emerging nationwide context.
- Provide an effective state-level HIE “voice” for timely information about SL-HIE experiences and perspectives and to convey strategic input from the Forum that advances HIE development across states and nationwide
- Provide targeted one-on-one technical supports and assistance to SL-HIE leaders in different stages as they develop and implement their statewide plans and governance and technical infrastructures in coordination with ONC.
- Provide a *Health Information Exchange Information Service* to enhance networking, shared learning and promising practices.

About AHIMA Foundation

The AHIMA Foundation is the philanthropic and charitable arm of AHIMA (the American Health Information Management Association). The Foundation was established in 1962 as the nonprofit entity of AHIMA as its sole corporation. The Foundation leads the field in professional health information management and research and development. www.ahimafoundation.org

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