



CHN Quarterly Update

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BCBST Awards CHN \$1.8M for Perinatal Project

Very soon, patients managing a high-risk pregnancy at east Tennessee CHCs will be able to receive specialized perinatal services via the CHN Telehealth Program thanks to a new \$1.8 million grant from the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation. The grant has been awarded to CHN, working in conjunction with Regional Obstetrical Consultants (ROC).

The Tennessee Perinatal Telemedicine Demonstration Project will establish a network of 11 telemedicine centers in rural hospitals and clinics in East Tennessee. Hubs will be located at the University of Tennessee Medical Center at Knoxville

and at Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga. These will be connected with the medical offices of ROC, perinatologists who serve the state-designated perinatal centers. In addition, existing CHN sites with telecommunication capabilities will also have access to these services.

High-risk obstetrical patients will be able to visit local clinics and have an ultrasound scan and examination. A perinatologist in Chattanooga or Knoxville will be "online" talking directly to the patient on one half of a telehealth monitor, while studying the real-time ultrasound scan on the other half of the monitor. The perinatologists would then

consult face-to-face via telemedicine equipment with the patient and the referring OB/GP and determine the best treatment for the patient.

As a result of this project we expect to see better access to perinatal and obstetric care, more choices in care, and consequently, better outcomes. NICU transports, lengths of NICU stays, and baby birth weights will be monitored to gauge progress throughout the program.

Participating demonstration sites will be connected via our high-speed secure network with connections to ROC as well as to regional

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CHN Launches Telehealth Business Plan

Has your clinic struggled with the practical aspects of bringing telehealth into daily operations?

While telehealth offers almost unlimited opportunities to expand access to health care, it is also a significant process change that has been difficult for some community health centers to implement.

But now, there are more

resources available to help you approach this potential treasure trove of new services a CHC can provide while still covering the necessary bases in primary care.

At the December 3rd meeting of the Community Health Network Board, CHN unveiled a Telehealth Business Plan for end-user sites. This plan is specifically

designed to help our member community health centers better integrate telehealth into day-to-day operations, and in the process, expand service offerings and access to specialty health care for patients across the state. The Business Plan walks through some of the basics including an overview of the equipment available, ways it

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Who knew?

- As of Dec.1, CHN Telehealth has facilitated 1038 cumulative telehealth visits.
- 16% of CHN telehealth retinal scans show diabetic retinopathy, often in patients with no previous diabetic diagnosis.
- The second participant in the CHN Telehealth retinal imaging program was diagnosed with an embolus on the optic nerve, indicative of an impending stroke. The patient was immediately referred for cardiac care.

Perinatal Demonstration Project, *cont. from page 1*

perinatal centers at the UTMC in Knoxville and at Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga.

The project staff will be comprised of two nurse practitioners, assigned to UTMC and Erlanger, and a clinical

administrator. CHN will provide technical services and ROC will provide clinical expertise, at a sliding scale for uninsured patients.

The first 2 clinics are expected to be operational in early 2009, with others

added over the following 18 months. CHN members with telehealth capabilities will be able to access perinatal services over the CHN Telehealth Network as soon as the connection has been established between the initial demonstration sites and ROC.

Telehealth Business Plan, *cont. from page 1*

can be utilized, specialties available, and how to schedule training. But, perhaps more importantly, it also covers some very specific information to walk CHC staff through every aspect of planning, billing and reporting for telehealth visits.

It is also possible to use the telehealth equipment for other innovative uses. An obvious opportunity is to utilize this equipment for CME and other training. What may not be as obvious is its use-

fulness for intra-organizational meetings across multiple sites.

Telehealth equipment even opens up possibilities clinically. For example, most parents have never seen an infected ear canal. The digital scopes and high definition video screen make it possible for a provider to bring a parent into the telehealth consultation area and provide a close up of the infected area as clinical staff explain the implications and treatment protocol.

Telehealth Project Director Deb Gott and her staff will be working closely with CHN members in 2009 to help bring more of these service offerings into the realm of very practical daily offerings for community health center patients. The Telehealth Business Plan is a key resource that they will be using to make it easy for clinics to integrate these offerings and expand the care available for the Tennesseans who most need access to that care.

Congratulations to Rural Medical Services:

NextGen Best Practices Award Finalist — Small Practice

In November, NextGen announced finalists and winners of its 3rd annual Best Practice Award competition at the NextGen Healthcare Users' Group Meeting held at the Opryland Convention Center in Nashville. Among the finalists Rural Medical Services of

Newport, TN was recognized in the Small Practice category representing practices of 1 to 10 physicians.

RMS was nationally acknowledged for 20% to 30% increases in patient visits (among different office locations) and

increased practice revenue of 7.6% in their first year using NextGen. CHN continues to promote the use of NextGen EMR products among our members in the expectation that other practices will also see increases in efficiency, revenue, and in health outcomes.

CHN to Offer Interpretation via Telehealth Network

CHN has facilitated a partnership with Health Assist Tennessee to offer interpretation and translation services in Tennessee CHCs.

"It just makes sense to leverage our existing telehealth network to bring a new kind of specialist – a translator – into local communities to improve access to health care and enhance the quality of care available," said Keith Williams, CHN CEO. "CHN is committed to finding solutions that bring affordable health care resources through our membership to patients that otherwise might not be served."

Participating clinics will be able to incorporate translation services using telephone, video conference, on-site or written translation into the primary

care, specialty care and mental health treatment they deliver.

Initially languages offered include Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, Dinka, Farsi, French, Kurdish-Sorani, Kurdish-Badinani, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese, and sign language to spoken English.

"Medical interpretation requires more than a literal translation of the words," said Dranda Whaley, Executive Director of Health Assist Tennessee. "There are physical and cultural cues that can make a huge difference in the recommended treatment and in the patient's health outcomes."

Currently, 55 community health and mental health centers have either

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*— Keith Williams,
CEO, CHN*

completed installation or are in the process of installing equipment to participate in the telehealth project. An additional 400 nonprofit treatment sites will soon connect to this network using FCC grant funding under the FCC's Rural Health Pilot Project offering nonprofit health care providers high-speed, secure connectivity over the CHN network.

Spotlight on Bargains: CCHS Makes Good Use of CHN's Staples Discounts



Business Advantage

In a world of increasingly tight budgets Pete Ruby, Comptroller for CCHS, is always looking out for good deals, especially on purchases like office supplies.

The Community Health Network has negotiated a series of purchasing programs for our members, including a discount buying plan with Staples known as the Staples Business Advantage.

When Pete got some of the details on the discounts he could get as a CHN member, he quickly put routine purchasing processes in place to take advantage of the program.

"Christ Community has 4 primary care clinics, 1 mobile primary care clinic, and 1 standalone dental clinic. And we are adding another clinic in early 2009," said Ruby. "It almost goes without saying that we have to watch our costs in order to meet the needs of our community and continue to grow."

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So, CCHS set up a purchasing manager at each location with tiered authorization to make purchases through the Staples Business Advantage program, including their CHN discounts.

They have empowered the sites to make economic purchasing decisions appropriate to their location while still taking advantage of the larger scale purchasing power of the CHN membership.

CCHS even went a step further to leverage the information available through this program by contacting the CHN Staples Account Manager, Gary Latham, to get his help putting together 2009 budgets.

"Pete said that he needed a 2008 spend amount for each location over the past year in order to have a base for the upcoming year's budget," remembers Latham. "I was able to

provide that information to him within 24 hours."

Ruby put this information to good use.

"The office supplies line item is a fraction of our \$14 million annual budget, but as we do budgets for next year every bit of real world information helps us to get to more realistic budgetary expectations," said Ruby.

All told, an analysis of the top 25 items purchased so far this year by CHN members using the Staples Business Advantage program shows a savings of 23% over the retail price published for those items on Staples.com which totals more than \$5,000 in savings just on office supplies.

Under the terms of the program, CHN has secured special pricing on printing and promotional items, as well. These can be accessed through StaplesPromo.com and then conveniently invoiced with your office supplies purchases.

To take advantage of your CHN membership discounts on Staples Business Advantage or StaplesPromo.com program contact Gary Latham at 865-357-1325 or Gary.Latham@Staples.com.

HRSA Officials Visit CHN's HIE Project for Lessons Learned

Thanksgiving week brought more for CHN than a healthy meal. Anthony Achampong from the Health Resources Services Administration arranged for a site visit to learn more about the progress being made with the Middle Tennessee Rural Health Information Network.

Questions ranged from the methodology being used to establish health information exchange at MTRHIN to the lessons learned so far in the implementation. Achampong met with Keith Williams and CHN staff to learn more about the NextGen Community



MTRHIN Project Director Chuck Pitt (right) demonstrates the CHN NextGen EMR to Anthony Achampong of HRSA

Health System being used to facilitate health information exchange among MTRHIN members. CHN also shared

information about the state-of-the-art data center which houses the network shared by CHN members.

The team travelled to Lafayette, TN to take Achampong on a tour of Macon County General Hospital, where he also met with MTRHIN President Dennis Wolford.

"The impression we got was that we are doing something right compared to other places in the country," said Keith Williams, CHN CEO. "We are excited to host Anthony and his colleagues any time they want to come to Tennessee."



P.O. Box 40
Oakdale, TN 37829

Phone: 866-519-2464
Fax: 866-692-5767
E-mail: Keith.Williams@CommunityHealth.net
On the web: www.CommunityHealth.net

Enhancing the business of Community Health

The Community Health Network, Inc. (CHN) is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation whose members include 17 community health center organizations and the Tennessee Primary Care Association (TPCA), collectively operating approximately 100 clinics. CHN's mission is to improve the quality and efficiency of health care delivery for medically underserved communities by providing affordable, integrated technology systems, expertise, and related services for community health centers. For more information go to www.CommunityHealth.net.

CHN Monthly Announcements

Staff Updates:

Hillary Newton, Telehealth Scheduling Coordinator – Hillary is joining us to support telehealth implementation efforts in East Tennessee. She comes to us from the Dean's office for the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. While at the University she worked her way through faculty credentialing, HIPAA training, and coordination of a variety of events, presentations, and daily activities for the Dean, along with coordinating the Dean's CME program schedule across the extensive telehealth network operated by the school. December marks her return home to Maryville, TN. Hilary is available at 866-519-2494 or Hillary.Newton@CommunityHealth.net.

Kelly Irwin, Telehealth Scheduling Coordinator – Kelly will be supporting telehealth implementation among CHN members in West Tennessee. Kelly earned her Bachelor's Degree in 2004 from UT-Knoxville and went on to pursue a Master of Public Health degree at The George Washington University, in Washington, D.C. In 2007, Kelly relocated to Hollister, California, to work as a Senior Program Director of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program at a Federally Qualified Community Health Center. While there, Kelly continued to work on her graduate thesis on the effects of policy changes on the prevalence of adolescent safety belt use. After finishing her Masters in May 2008, Kelly relocated back to her hometown of Fairview, TN. Kelly is available at 866-519-2494 or Kelly.Irwin@CommunityHealth.net.

Joey Pickens I.T. Specialist — Joey is a recent graduate of the Tennessee Technology Center in Crump, TN. While attending courses for his Certificate of Technology, he was asked by the school to participate in a work study program that furthered his experience. He comes highly recommended by the staff that supervised him. He will be serving the West Tennessee area including Lifespan Health Centers, Hardeman County Health Centers, Perry County Medical Center and other sites, as needed. Joey and his wife Patricia live in Stantonville, TN and he is a valued addition to the CHN Information Technology Staff. Joey is available at 866-519-2464 or Joey.Pickens@CommunityHealth.net.

Program Updates:

TennCare Reimbursement for Telehealth Visits – CHN and TPCA have negotiated an agreement with the TennCare MCOs to secure reimbursement for visits that occur via telehealth for both the specialist AND the originating site. In this agreement, Americhoice and Blue Cross Value Options have also agreed to fund a \$2.5 million expansion of the CHN Telehealth network and TPCA training programs. All 3 MCOs have agreed to reimburse for telehealth services at both ends! More info to follow.