

IDPH Receives Funding to Advance e-Health Initiative

Nearly \$8.4 million awarded for statewide health information exchange

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has been awarded \$8,375,000 over the next four years to plan and implement Iowa's statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) announced the funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Iowa e-Health is a public and private collaboration with a mission of improving health care quality, safety and efficiency through the use of health information technology (health IT). Often, patients taken to the emergency room are unable to tell health professionals about the medications they've taken or recent conditions for which they've been treated. Health IT offers an opportunity to improve patient care through the collection of patient health information in electronic health records that can be shared with other care providers through the statewide health information exchange.

"This information is vital for professionals to provide effective care that can save lives," said IDPH Director Tom Newton. "Regardless of whether you receive care across the street or across the state, medical professionals will have the ability to access your important health information instantly through the secure statewide health information exchange."

Iowa e-Health is working closely with Iowa Medicaid Enterprise and the Iowa Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (HITREC) to align planning and implementation activities. Iowa Medicaid Enterprise will provide incentives to qualified providers for "meaningful use" of health IT. The HITREC, administered by Iowa Foundation for Medical Care, will provide technical assistance to Iowa providers adopting health IT and connecting to the statewide health information exchange.

The Iowa Legislature created the Electronic Health Information Executive Committee and Advisory Council in 2008 to work with IDPH to plan and promote health IT in Iowa. Building on a preliminary strategic plan approved by the State Board of Health in July 2009, Iowa e-Health is currently creating the Iowa e-Health Strategic and Operational Plan. This plan will describe the governance; finance; technical infrastructure; legal and policy; and business and technical operations for developing the statewide health information exchange.

For more information about Iowa e-Health, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/ehealth.