San Diego Regional Healthcare Information Exchange Announces its Inaugural Board of Directors

The new organization will assume leadership and oversight of the San Diego Beacon Community, a federally-funded, 3-year initiative to build, strengthen and demonstrate the benefits of health IT in our region as a model for the rest of the nation.

San Diego, CA (PRWEB) September 26, 2012 -- San Diego Beacon Community program leader, Dr. Ted Chan, announced the creation of the San Diego Regional Healthcare Information Exchange (SDRHIE, aka San Diego Beacon), an independent, community organization whose mission is to improve the health of all San Diegans through advances in health information technology (health IT). The new organization will assume leadership and oversight of the San Diego Beacon Community, a federally-funded, 3-year initiative to build, strengthen and demonstrate the benefits of health IT in our region as a model for the rest of the nation.

The new community Board will oversee San Diego Beacon’s health IT portfolio, including the implementation of a community health information exchange in San Diego that will allow physicians to exchange medical information electronically at the time of care and treatment with the patient’s consent. Rady Children’s Hospital – San Diego, UC San Diego Health System and the VA San Diego Healthcare System are currently active on the exchange, with other healthcare organizations planning to join later this year. Other services include real-time transmission of electrocardiograms and patient information from ambulances to hospital emergency departments; and electronic reporting of immunizations and infectious diseases to County public health to improve public health surveillance and prevention. In the near future, SDRHIE will also launch a secure messaging service to notify healthcare providers about their patients being seen in emergency departments or hospitals.

“Having a patient’s medical information electronically at our fingertips will improve the care we can provide, particularly during emergencies,” commented SDRHIE Board member and emergency medicine physician Dr. David Guss. “For example, having an electrocardiogram transmitted electronically to our emergency department from the ambulance reduces the time to treatment, promotes better care, and improves the outcome for a patient suffering a heart attack” he stated. Nick Macchione, County Health and Human Services Agency Director appreciates the improvements in public health stating “electronic reporting and data will significantly enhance our ability to monitor and prevent major disease outbreaks throughout San Diego.”

Albert Oriol, SDRHIE Board member and Chief Information Officer for Rady Children’s Hospital – San Diego, noted “This is a major step forward for our community. Healthcare organizations are working together to make sure providers can access critical information when they need it. Better information will mean higher quality care and lower the risk of medical errors for all patients.”

The inaugural SDRHIE Board of Directors includes leadership from across the San Diego healthcare community including hospital systems, community clinics, medical groups and health plans and local government:

• PRESIDENT: Robin Brown, Jr., Chief Executive, Scripps Green Hospital, Scripps Health
• SECRETARY: Stephen O’Kane, President/CEO, Council of Community Clinics
• TREASURER: William Spooner, Senior Vice President/CIO, Sharp HealthCare
• Joan E. Burritt, RN, SDMC COO/Interim Chief Nurse Executive, Kaiser Permanente San Diego
• Norma Diaz, CEO, Community Health Group

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In the coming months, the SDRHIE Board and staff will be engaging other members of the community as to the use and benefits of SDRHIE’s services. In addition, the Board will provide strategic direction for SDRHIE, and also be responsible for transitioning the San Diego Beacon Community from its initial federal funding to a self-sustaining entity supported by the community. As part of that effort, SDRHIE is in the process of applying for non-profit status with the State and Federal government.

About the San Diego Beacon Community
The San Diego Beacon Community is a partnership of health care providers, clinics, hospitals, emergency medical services and public health organizations. The Community’s goal is to improve the quality of healthcare delivered for all San Diegans using health information technology. Visit www.SanDiegoBeacon.org for more information.

About the Beacon Community Program
The Health and Human Services Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) provided $250 million to 17 “Beacon” communities across the country to demonstrate how health IT can achieve the three-part aim of better health, better care at lower cost. Each community, with its unique population and regional context, is actively pursuing the following areas of focus:

- Building and strengthening the health IT infrastructure and exchange capabilities;
- Translating investments in health IT to measureable improvements in cost, quality and population health; and
- Developing innovative approaches to performance measurement, technology and care delivery.

To learn more about electronic health record adoption, Meaningful Use and other areas of health IT, visit www.healthit.gov. Information on ONC’s broad range of activities may be viewed at http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov__home/1204
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