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## News Release

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### **HHS Awards Contracts to Develop Nationwide Health Information Network**

#### **Major Step Toward Secure and Portable Health Information for American Consumers**

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt announced today the award of contracts totaling \$18.6 million to four groups of health care and health information technology organizations to develop prototypes for a Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) architecture. The contracts awarded to these four consortia will move the nation toward the President's goal of personal electronic health records by creating a uniform architecture for health care information that can follow consumers throughout their lives.

"The Nationwide Health Information Network contracts will bring together technology developers with doctors and hospitals to create innovative state-of-the-art ideas for how health information can be securely shared," Secretary Leavitt said. "This effort will help design an information network that will transform our health care system resulting in higher quality, lower costs, less hassle and better care for American consumers."

These contracts complete the foundation for an interoperable, standards-based network for the secure exchange of health care information. HHS previously has awarded contracts to create processes to harmonize health information standards, develop criteria to certify and evaluate health IT products, and develop solutions to address variations in business policies and state laws that affect privacy and security practices that may pose challenges to the secure communication of health information.

The four consortia are led respectively by Accenture, Computer Science Corporation (CSC), International Business Machines (IBM) and Northrop Grumman. Each consortium is a partnership between technology developers and health care providers in three local health care markets. Each group will develop an architecture and a prototype network for secure information sharing among hospitals, laboratories, pharmacies and physicians in the three participating markets. Additionally, all four consortia will work together to ensure that

information can move seamlessly between each of the four networks to be developed, thus establishing a single infrastructure among all the consortia for the sharing of electronic health information.

“These prototypes are the key to information portability for American consumers and are a major step in our national effort to modernize health care delivery,” said David J. Brailer, M.D, Ph.D., National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. “This is a critical piece of moving health IT from hope to reality.”

Each of the four consortia will design and implement a standards-based network prototype during the coming year. The prototypes will test patient identification and information locator services; user authentication, access control and other security protections and specialized network functions, as well as test the feasibility of large-scale deployment. The work of the consortia will inform the deliberations of the American Health Information Community (the Community), a new federal advisory committee chaired by Secretary Leavitt, which is charged with providing input to HHS and the industry on how to make health records digital and interoperable.

The consortia will share ideas and information about the architecture and prototypes with each other and with the public in order to accelerate secure and seamless exchange of health information across the nation. Once created, the architecture design for each of the networks will be placed in the public domain to stimulate others to develop further innovative approaches to implementing health information technology.

The NHIN consortia will work closely with other HHS partners, including the Health Information Technology Standards Panel established by the American National Standards Institute, the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology, and the Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration established by RTI and the National Governor’s Association.

The four Nationwide Health Information Network Consortia consist of the following organizations:

- Accenture, working with Apelon, Cisco, CGI-AMS, Creative Computing Solutions, eTech Security Pro, Intellithought, Lucent Glow, Oakland Consulting Group, Oracle, and Quovadx. This group will work with the following health market areas: Eastern Kentucky Regional Health Community (Kentucky); CareSpark (Tennessee); and West Virginia eHealth Initiative (West Virginia).
- CSC, working with Browsersoft, Business Networks International, Center for Information Technology Leadership, Connecting for Health, DB Consulting Group, eHealth Initiative, Electronic Health Record Vendors Association, Microsoft, Regenstrief Institute, SiloSmashers, and Sun Microsystems. This group will work with the following health market areas: Indiana Health Information Exchange (Indiana); MA-SHARE (Massachusetts); and Mendocino HRE (California).
- IBM, working with Argosy Omnimedia, Business Innovation, Cisco, HMS Technologies, IDL Solutions, Ingenium, and VICCS. This group will work with the following health market areas: Taconic Health Information Network and Community (New York); North

Carolina Healthcare Information and Communications Alliance (Research Triangle, North Carolina); and North Carolina Healthcare Information and Communications Alliance (Rockingham County, North Carolina).

- Northrop Grumman, working with Air Commander, Axolotl, Client/Server Software Solutions, First Consulting Group, SphereCom Enterprises, and WebMD. This group will work with the following health market areas: Santa Cruz RHIO (Santa Cruz, California); and HealthBridge (Cincinnati, Ohio); University Hospitals Health System (Cleveland, Ohio).

The four contracts result from an HHS Request for Proposals (RFP) that was announced by Secretary Leavitt and Dr. Brailer on June 6, 2005. HHS released the RFPs after receiving public comment on how best to achieve nationwide interoperability of health information through a Request for Information (RFI) published on Nov. 15, 2004.

More details on these contracts are available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20070819162358/http://www.hhs.gov/healthit>.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20070819162358/http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

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