

## Launch of Maine Health Exchange Draws National Attention

Plans to launch one of the nation's first statewide health information exchanges in Maine has drawn substantial national attention.

National publications covering clinical, IT and legal issues have featured news about Maine's system since HealthInfoNet announced plans last week to begin building the new electronic exchange in early February.

Physicians, hospital leaders and public health officials gathered in Manchester (Maine) on January 16, 2008 to announce that more than \$4 million has now been raised to begin construction of the nonprofit system. In addition to making headlines across the state, the news was picked up in nearly a dozen national health care trade publications. Visit [www.hinfont.org](http://www.hinfont.org) to link to many of these stories. This interest signals growing national interest in efforts to improve quality and moderate the growth of health costs through electronic information exchanges.

"Our support for HealthInfoNet reflects the Foundation's confidence that this initiative can transform health care delivery for every person in Maine." According to Wendy Wolf, M.D., M.P.H., President, Maine Health Access Foundation, one of HealthInfoNet's strongest supporters.

Beginning this winter, more than 2,000 healthcare providers, including 15 rural and urban hospitals across Maine and one-third of practicing physicians in Maine, will join with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention in a major 24-month demonstration of the new network. Hospitals and physician practices taking part in the pilot account for more than half of the state's annual inpatient hospital admissions and nearly 40 percent of Maine's outpatient visits each year. Following the successful completion of the demonstration phase, plans call for HealthInfoNet to be expanded to include other providers who care for Maine's entire 1.3 million residents.

Organizations taking part in the pilot include Maine's four largest health delivery systems (Central Maine Health Care, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, MaineGeneral Medical Centers and MaineHealth) as well as an independent, multi-site primary care practice, Martin's Point Health Care, and an independent rural hospital, Franklin Memorial Hospital located in Farmington. The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which is developing a statewide public health information system, also will be part of the demonstration phase. This linkage will support the laboratory reporting requirements mandated by Maine law for disease outbreak management purposes.

Many of Maine's other community hospitals have been involved in HealthInfoNet's planning process and are expected to become part of the statewide network following the demonstration phase.

Organized as a public-private partnership, HealthInfoNet has received funding support from a wide range of private foundations, provider organizations and state and federal government agencies. Funding for the two-year pilot has come primarily from the Maine Health Access Foundation (\$2 million) and \$1.1 million that will be paid to HealthInfoNet by Maine's four largest healthcare delivery systems and Martin's Point Health Care to provide technical services that will help develop their internal health information systems and lay the groundwork for the statewide network that will ultimately benefit all of Maine's healthcare providers and the patients they serve.

HealthInfoNet has retained 3M Health Information Systems and Orion Health to build and operate Maine's health information exchange. To learn more about the demonstration project, visit [www.hinfont.org](http://www.hinfont.org) or contact HIN Executive Director Dev Culver at [dculver@hinfont.org](mailto:dculver@hinfont.org).