



Press Release
Immediate Release

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Medical Providers to Benefit from AHIT Regional Extension Center and WellFlorida Council Partnership

(Gainesville, Fla. – January 27, 2011) – Primary healthcare providers in Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Suwannee, and Union counties can now enroll in The Center for the Advancement of Health IT's (AHIT) Regional Extension Center (REC) program. WellFlorida Council, an authorized outreach partner, will help providers review eligibility standards and enroll in the program. Membership in the program, which is free to eligible providers, allows access to resources and education, and assistance in achieving meaningful use of certified electronic health records (EHRs). Area providers interested in enrolling in the program can contact kendrasm@wellflorida.org.

Members will have access to AHIT's prequalified certified EHR vendors, group purchasing programs and advocacy on vendor relations; privacy and security best practices; partnering with local, state, and national health information exchange (HIE); and 24x7 access to the AHIT Resource Center. Also included are discounted rates on best practice guidelines and toolkits for practice/workflow redesign, EHR contracting, EHR implementation and health IT training.

AHIT, is a REC program operated by Community Health Centers Alliance (CHCA), a non-profit health information technology leader with over a decade of experience in implementing and supporting this technology across health centers in Florida.

"Federal legislation has tasked healthcare professionals with navigating the maze of implementing EHRs in the coming years. We all know that medical providers' first priority is quality patient care. That means providers and their staff have to stay on top of current trends and policies. Together, WellFlorida and AHIT offer providers support and resources to keep them abreast of federal health IT legislation and help them access EHR incentive funds," says Kendra Siler-Marsiglio, Director of WellFlorida's Rural Health Partnership.

According to a survey released January 13th by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, four-fifths of the nation's hospitals, and 41 percent of office-based physicians, intend to take advantage of federal incentive payments for adoption and meaningful use of certified electronic health records technology. Any medical provider who does achieve meaningful use of certified EHRs may qualify for incentive payments of up to \$44,000 per provider from Medicare or up to \$63,750 per provider from Medicaid to help overcome the financial barrier to EHR adoption. For more information on eligibility for the CMS EHR Adoption Incentive program, visit CMS.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms or visit: AdvanceHealthIT.org.

The national Health and Human Service's REC program has allocated \$677 million to establish 62 centers nationwide, linking group practices, critical access hospitals, community health centers and related healthcare organizations through sustainable programs to deploy EHRs in those settings, to connect healthcare organizations, and establish meaningful use functionality.

About WellFlorida: WellFlorida Council, Inc., located in Gainesville, FL, is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization created

in 1969. WellFlorida works with healthcare professionals, government agencies, and community partners to perform outreach, develop critically-needed programs, and provide nonprofit management services. WellFlorida's mission is to forge partnerships in planning, research, and service that build healthier communities. For more information visit WellFlorida.org.

About AHIT: AHIT, located in St. Petersburg, FL, has been selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology as one of a select group of organizations throughout the U.S. designated as having the experience and capacity necessary to assist healthcare providers with the task of modernizing their practices with certified EHRs. For more information, visit AdvanceHealthIT.org. AHIT is an organization of Community Health Centers Alliance, Inc., a member-supported 501(c)(3) serving not-for-profit healthcare providers. CHCA provides members with group purchasing and information technology services that allow its providers to benefit from economies of scale and improve patient care in the communities they serve through critical healthcare information systems services and management.

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