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## Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS) Awarded \$15.7 Million to Lead Collaborative Health IT “Beacon Community”

**Beacon Community of the Inland Northwest (BCIN) to enable meaningful use of health IT across 14 counties in eastern Washington and northern Idaho focused on prevention and improved management of diabetes.**

May 10, 2010

Spokane, WA

Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS), nationally recognized for the advancement and use of health information technology (HIT), in collaboration with a coalition of health care and public health organizations in eastern Washington and northern Idaho, has entered into a \$15.7 million cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Led by INHS, the Beacon Community of the Inland Northwest (BCIN) is one of 15 communities across the country selected by DHHS to serve as pilot communities for eventual wide-scale use of health information technology. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the agreement will allow the BCIN to focus on increased care coordination for patients with diabetes in rural areas and extend the existing INHS health information exchange through collaboration to provide a higher level of connectivity throughout the region.

“The established INHS health information network, in collaboration with the region’s health care community, lays an important foundation to carry out the goals of the Beacon Program,” said Tom Fritz, CEO of INHS. “It is the vision of this project to work with our partners to expand health information exchange across the Inland Northwest, balancing the needs of patients, providers, and payers, protecting personal privacy, enabling competition to advance health care services, and promoting connectivity to optimize health care and patient outcomes.”

The BCIN represents a wide geographic region in eastern Washington and northern Idaho which is predominately rural with a large proportion of traditionally medically underserved populations. In addition to INHS other BCIN partners include Community Choice, Washington State Department of Health, the Washington Academy of Family Physicians, the Critical Access Hospital Network, SAIC and the North Central Washington Health Collaborative. Twenty-five hospitals, 18 federally-qualified health centers and more than 3200 physicians, as well as pharmacies and long term care agencies across the region have indicated interest in collaborating on the BCIN.

The BCIN will be working together over the 36-month project timeline to accomplish the following goals:

- Increasing meaningful use of health information technology for all medical conditions
- Promoting cost efficiency by reducing use and costs of emergent and inpatient care for diabetes-related complications
- Improving quality of care by increasing compliance with diabetes preventive health services
- Improving core preventive measures for individuals with diabetes
- Promoting care coordination across the state and across the country by connecting the BCIN to the Washington and Idaho state health information exchanges and to the nationwide health information exchange

“This is recognition of the work that has been done collaboratively in our region over the past 15 years,” said

Jac Davies, director for INHS. "Diabetes is an overwhelming problem for the region and the nation. We will be able to accelerate work needed to provide higher levels of care coordination for patients with diabetes, particularly in rural communities."

In 2009 it was estimated that there were 23.7 million people in the United States with diabetes, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. That number is expected to grow to 44.1 million by 2034. Annual diabetes related spending was \$113 billion for 2009 and is projected to be \$336 billion by 2034.\*

Note: Maps of the Beacon Community of Inland Northwest (BCIN) and Inland Northwest Health Services health information exchange network can be found at [www.inhs.org](http://www.inhs.org).

**About Inland Northwest Health Services:**

Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS), a non-profit corporation based in Spokane, Washington, provides the backbone for current and future innovative technologies in health information exchange. INHS connects 38 hospitals throughout the region, allowing physicians and healthcare providers to securely access critical patient information utilizing wired and wireless technologies. The INHS health information technology network includes thousands of physicians, hundreds of clinics and physician offices and more than 3.5 million electronic medical records. INHS also implements and supports physician office electronic medical record systems, making it easy for physicians to transition from paper to electronic records.

INHS provides collaboration in health care services on behalf of its member hospitals Deaconess Medical Center, Providence Holy Family Hospital, Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children's Hospital, and Valley Hospital & Medical Center, and the community. Other INHS lines of business include St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute, Community Health Education & Resources (CHER), Children's Miracle Network, Northwest TeleHealth and Northwest MedStar. For more information, visit [www.inhs.org](http://www.inhs.org).

\*Source: Huang ES, Basu A, Capretta JC, et al. Projecting the Future of Diabetes Population Size and Related Costs for the U.S. Diabetes Care 32:2225-2229

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