



NEWS

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Special Points of Interest

- **North Valley construction update.**
- **Check out how the new expansion at CWH is going.**
- **Construction has started at Mid-Valley Hospital.**
- **Do you have Medicare questions? See SHIBA Article.**

MICROSOFT® HEALTHVAULT™

Washington State is on the forefront of healthcare information technology and is showcasing an innovative model for providing consumers with access to their medical records that has the potential to empower consumers and to reduce healthcare risks and costs. Community Choice Healthcare Network, a healthcare consortium in North Central Washington, is undertaking a pilot project to demonstrate the value of a state-



wide Health Record Bank (HRB) network. Funded in 2008 by the Washington State Health Care Authority, this pilot is one of the first patient-controlled HRBs in the United States.

Over the past year, Community choice has been developing a consumer based Health Record Bank as an online location where individuals

can store their health records, where health records are transferred automatically from providers, and where health records from multiple health providers can be aggregated. This reduces the need to keep all of these records in paper form that may be hard to retrieve or easily updated.

Jesus Hernandez, Executive Director of Community

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BEACON GRANT

Community Choice has partnered with INHS of Spokane to submit a proposal for Beacon Community funding. The INHS proposal focuses on improving care coordination and strengthening the exchange of health information for people with diabetes in Central and Eastern Washington State. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) at the federal Department of

Health and Human Services recently announced the availability of \$235 million in funding for a Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program. This program will establish \$220 million in cooperative agreements with communities around the country to build and strengthen their health IT infrastructure and health information exchange capabilities to achieve measurable improvements in health

care quality, safety, efficiency, and population health. Awards of \$10 - \$20 million for the 3-year project period will be made to 15 qualified non-profit organizations or government entities representing geographic health care communities around the United States. Communities selected for the funding must already have a relatively high level of health IT adoption in order to be

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NORTH VALLEY HOSPITAL ADDITION

North Valley Hospital is now offering tours of the new addition every Friday 9:00AM - 5:00PM. For More Information please contact John Boyd at (509) 486 - 3141 or (509) 486 - 3118. You can contact North Valley to schedule a tour or you're welcome to just drop in.



CENTRAL WASHINGTON HOSPITAL EXPANSION

At the June 23, 2008 Board meeting, Central Washington Hospital's Board of Directors approved a \$150 million ex-

pansion and remodel on the existing campus. A new five story patient tower will contain 174 private patient rooms.

It will also include offices, office space, an entry drive from Miller Street, and a new parking structure for 200 vehicles.

The tower will be built in the central portion of the existing hospital after the oldest parts of the facility are demolished. The Transitional Care Unit, Rehabilitation Services, the Pharmacy, and other office spaces will be relocated. The project will include a total of 190,000 square feet as well as remodels of other patient care ser-



YVETTE DAVIS/WBJ



YVETTE DAVIS/WBJ

MID-VALLEY HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION



Construction has started! Recently, the heavy machinery rolled up to Mid-Valley Hospital and started clearing out the area where the ER expansion will be placed.

BEACON GRANT CONTINUED

able to achieve high enough levels of meaningful use in the short term to demonstrate the feasibility of cost and quality improvements during the three years of the grant. The goal of the Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program is to demonstrate a vision of

the future where hospitals, clinicians and patients are meaningful users of health IT, and together the community achieves measurable improvements in health care quality, safety, efficiency, and population health. We are excited about partnering with INHS on this

important project.

UPDATE: On May 5, INHS was awarded a \$15.7 million Beacon grant. More details to come soon!

Allen Dietz, Operations Manager

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORNER

Becoming a “lean organization” is taking on a new meaning for healthcare organizations as a consequence of the challenging current economic times. To the extent possible, we are doing everything possible to create “common utility” functions within Community Choice that can help our members consolidate functions where it makes sense without losing their oversight and control. Some of these include: Group purchasing functions; first tier IT maintenance support and project management; coop opportunities to develop within membership sectors; and the ongoing work we have done in increasing access to healthcare, grant writing and administration.

Leveraging ARRA “stimulus” funding for our members and region is one of our key areas of focus. Our members

need to prepare to qualify for the federal incentives and avoid the penalties associated with the adoption of Health Information Technology and achieving “meaningful use” compliance. These are exciting times! Community Choice will continue to play an important role in the central part of the state in terms of Health Information Exchange (HIE) development and Regional Extension Center (REC) Services. Community Choice is part of the consortium of organizations that, lead by Qualis Health, represent the REC serving Washington and Idaho. More on that will be announced in the coming months.

Washington State moving towards a fluid Health Information Exchange with a strong consumer-centric emphasis makes Health Record Banks an import-

ant component of the future healthcare environment. The state continues to see the Health Record Banks playing an important role in statewide HIE infrastructure. We will continue to bring this opportunity to our members and the entire region. The potential of this utility to support chronic care management models by our members is significant. Community Choice represents the best collective will and interest of our membership. Don't hesitate to contact us with your input and insights, or with any questions regarding what these opportunities mean to your healthcare organization.

Jesús Hernández, MPA
Executive Director

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Choice, said “The consumer-managed health record bank model will change healthcare as we know it, facilitating greater participation by consumers in their own care. This project represents an important step in demonstrating a

different approach to addressing the key challenges of making comprehensive electronic medical records available at any point of care.” Community Choice uses a product from Microsoft HealthVault to deliver the HRB to users. If you would

would like to read more information about HRBs, please visit our website, www.communitychoice.us.

Doug McLeod
Special Projects Manager

SHIBA HELPLINE MEDICARE QUESTIONS

We have volunteers who can help you with your health care coverage questions. Our volunteers are part of the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) HelpLine that provides **free** health care coverage education, assistance, and advocacy.

Our volunteers are experts in Medicare, Medigap coverage, employment-related health benefits, managed care, fraud and abuse questions, and more.

We train and closely supervise all our volunteers. Our volunteers are impartial and objective, and are not affiliated with any insurance company or product. There are over 250 volunteers statewide, who represent nearly every county in the state. They will help you by phone, in person, and through group presentations.

SHIBA HelpLine assists consumers with choices involving private health insurance as well as many government programs,

such as: Medicare, Medicaid, Basic Health, and Children's Health Insurance Program. To find out more about how we can help you and your family or would like to become a volunteer CALL US!

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(or)

1-800-562-6900



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