



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 18, 2009

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**DMHC Announces Grant to Provide Better Health Care for Patients
throughout Los Angeles County via Health Information Technology**

\$1,304,943 grant will improve the coordination and delivery of care through HIT

(Los Angeles) – California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) Director Cindy Ehnes was joined by representatives today from Health-e-LA to announce a grant that will improve the coordination and delivery of health care for the most vulnerable populations across Los Angeles County. This grant will improve the exchange of patient information between 24 community clinics and the County by allowing doctors to easily access digital versions of health records, no matter which facility patients utilize.

“With the economic downturn and shrinking private investment in health information technology, this grant will complete and implement a project to improve health care across Los Angeles County, using advanced technology that will enhance quality of care for patients,” said Cindy Ehnes. “It sets the example for other health care providers to invest in health information technology and demonstrates that electronic health records can benefit all Californians.”

The \$1,304,943 grant was awarded to Health-e-LA, a coalition of healthcare associations, public agencies, foundations, universities, consumer groups and researchers, as part of nearly \$6 million in new grants to health care providers, clinics, and community groups announced by Director Ehnes on January 27 aimed at promoting health information technology and medical education to improve California's health care delivery system for underserved populations. The funding for the grant comes from a \$50 million charitable investment required by the DMHC and the California Department of Insurance from PacifiCare Health Systems when it merged with UnitedHealth Group in 2005. As part of the \$50 million in charitable grants, \$25 million is dedicated to grants to be distributed in four funding cycles.

The 21-month Health-e-LA project will create a secure web-based patient health record application accessible across Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC) and the

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Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (LAC DHS) facilities. The patient health record will include: patient demographics; health history; medical procedures and dates of procedures; names of facilities visited and types of services received; and, current and recent medications prescribed.

Additionally the grant will fund a study by Claremont University to evaluate the improved care and efficiency resulting from the exchange of clinical data among safety net providers.

“This is a system that makes the process of receiving care far more efficient by enabling a provider to pull up a snapshot of a patient’s medical record in 10 seconds,” added LAC DHS Director of Clinical Resource Management (CRM) Jeffrey Guterman, MD, who led development of the ESS system within LAC DHS. “Sharing important clinical information across disparate geographies and organizations is now a reality that will lead to better patient care.”

Health-e-LA is a collaboration of healthcare providers and stakeholders dedicated to improving safety and quality of care through health information technology and health information exchange. Health-e-LA members include CCALAC, a coalition of 42 community clinics throughout the county that serves nearly one million predominantly uninsured and low income patients a year, and LAC DHS, which provides healthcare to nearly 700,000 people, including approximately 275,000 visits annually. Other members include Cedar Sinai Medical Center, LA Care Health Plan and, the QueensCare Foundation.

The fourth and final cycle of the PacifiCare/United grant-application process runs January 5 through February 20, 2009. Copies of the Request for Proposal, which includes complete instructions and information on qualifications, are available on line at www.dmhc.ca.gov.

The California Department of Managed Health Care is the only stand-alone HMO watchdog agency in the nation, touching the lives of more than 21 million enrollees. The DMHC has assisted more than 800,000 Californians resolve their HMO problems through its 24-hour Help Center, educates consumers on health care rights and responsibilities, and works closely with HMO plans to ensure a solvent and stable managed health care system.

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