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## **Alaska health professionals, state pilot medical information exchange program**

### **Goal is 300 active users by June 2012**

ANCHORAGE — The Alaska eHealth Network is signing up Alaska health providers to participate in a “health information exchange,” by means of direct secure messaging, to allow providers to communicate and share electronically across the health care industry.

“The implementation of direct secure messaging is a critical step in achieving the goals that the state committed to when we agreed to participate in the health information exchange program,” said Paul Cartland, health information technology project manager.

The data, which may include referrals, laboratory results and discharge summaries, can be shared as images or as discrete data in a structured format similar to a database or spreadsheet. The overall purpose for sharing data is to improve the quality of care and transitions of care, and reduce redundant tests, Cartland explained.

Direct secure messaging is a national standard for secure and meaningful exchange of personal health information between known entities.

Currently the system is being used by providers in the state and is being piloted by state personnel. Participants who take part in the exchange will benefit through better HIPAA compliance, reduced medical errors, fewer duplicate diagnostic procedures, less paper usage, less postage and more timely delivery.

“The state lab will participate in an effort to pilot sending lab results to providers to enable them to meet the ‘Meaningful Use’ criteria required for participation in the Electronic Health Record (EHR) incentive program, and will try to find interested clinicians who normally receive results from the lab,” Cartland said.

Alaska is also part of a consortium of states — Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado and Hawaii — working toward development and testing of a provider directory to allow providers in participating states to obtain each other’s direct secure messaging

addresses to facilitate interstate exchange. The ultimate goal of sharing information is the development of a nationwide health information network.

For more information, go to: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/hit/.aspx>, and <http://www.ak-ehealth.org/>.

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