

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**REGIONAL EXTENSION CENTERS AND HIMSS EHR ASSOCIATION JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT PROVIDERS IN EHR SELECTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL USE**

**ONC applauds collaborative efforts that support the national Health IT agenda**

**ORLANDO, FLORIDA—February 21, 2011** The Regional Extension Center (REC) Vendor Selection and Management Community of Practice (VSM CoP) and the HIMSS EHR Association (EHR Association) announced today the formation of a joint initiative, the EHR Vendor Communications Workgroup, in recognition of the need for long-term cooperation and collaboration among RECs and EHR companies to benefit healthcare providers and their patients as they implement EHRs and work toward meeting meaningful use requirements. The overarching goal of this new Workgroup is to ensure that the adoption and use of health information technology (HIT) results in improved efficiencies, usability, healthcare quality, clinical decision support, and better outcomes.

“Collaborating toward our shared goal of supporting high quality, safe healthcare will benefit consumers, their healthcare providers, as well as EHR software companies and the RECs,” stated Mat Kendall, Director of the Office of Provider Adoption Support. “Our new charter has established a framework for establishing achievable goals, developing mutual best practices, and sharing knowledge, Kendall went on to say.

The new EHR Vendor Communications Workgroup will be comprised of an equal number of representatives from the VSM CoP and from the EHR Association. “RECs are committed to working with all vendors so that we can support providers by helping them move forward in their EHR implementation toward achieving meaningful use,” commented Ken Berry, Rhode Island Quality Institute REC Program Management Director and member of the REC VSM CoP Advisory Board. “Additionally, we are in a position to provide valuable feedback to the EHR Association as to what is most effective in helping providers with their EHR implementations.”

Charlie Jarvis, NextGen Healthcare, Vice President, Healthcare Services and Government Relations, and Vice Chairman of the EHR Association commented,

“We’re enthusiastic about this important collaboration, Creating a model approach for REC/EHR company collaboration will serve the goals of our shared constituencies, as well as help providers gain the greatest benefit from the taxpayer-funded services of the REC program.”

“Our short-term goals include identifying best practices for vendor selection and provider adoption, developing industry-wide REC supported approaches standards to enable EHR systems to communicate, and coordinating resources, educational forums, and vendor-neutral case studies that illustrate the value of EHRs,” Jarvis concluded.

Long-term, the Workgroup will be dedicated to keeping EHRs and HIT evolving in directions that best serve the needs of providers and their patients. The focus will be on developing high quality EHR systems, providing continuous quality improvement, and fostering innovation with new technologies.

###

### **About the Regional Extension Centers**

*The RECs are nonprofit organizations that receive subsidized funding from the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) to develop materials and provide technical assistance initially to priority primary care providers (PPCP) in the selection, implementation, and upgrades of EHR technology, enabling providers to meet Meaningful Use incentives. In performing their mission, 62 RECs are responsible for negotiating with EHR Vendors on behalf of 100,000 providers and leveraging the combined purchasing power of physicians they represent. RECs share tools, knowledge, and best practices through 14 Communities of Practice (CoP), one of which is the Vendor Selection and Management CoP. A primary goal of the VSM CoP is to educate providers on EHR Vendor Selection and to assist the providers in using their EHR systems in a way that will enhance the quality of healthcare delivered to patients. An advisory board of REC members governs each CoP where they invite the exchange of information via workgroup calls, onsite and web-hosted training, as well as the HITRC Portal (<http://www.hitrc-collaborative.org>)*

### **About HIMSS EHR Association**

*The EHR vendor community is represented by the HIMSS EHR Association (EHR Association). The EHR Association is a trade association of 46 electronic health record (EHR) companies that have joined together to lead the HIT industry in the accelerated adoption of electronic health records in hospital and ambulatory care settings in the US. Representing a substantial portion of the installed EHR systems in the US, the Association provides a leadership forum for the vendor community to speak with a unified voice relative to standards development, the EHR certification process, interoperability, performance and quality measures, and other EHR issues as they become subject to increasing government, insurance, and provider driven initiatives and requests. Go to <http://www.himsshra.org> for more information.*

*For additional information, please contact:*

*John Lau ([johnlau@maximus.com](mailto:johnlau@maximus.com)) or Mike Uretz ([mikeu@ehrgroup.com](mailto:mikeu@ehrgroup.com)), co-chairs VSM REC Vendor Communications Workgroup*

*Elizabeth West ([ewest123@msn.com](mailto:ewest123@msn.com)), for the EHR Association*