

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Rhode Island Regional Extension Center (RI REC) Launches Marketplace; Will Enable Health Care Professionals to Achieve Meaningful Use of Electronic Health Records (EHRs)**

**PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND** – Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) is pleased to announce that the Rhode Island Regional Extension Center (REC) Vendor Marketplace is now open. Made possible by a federal grant, the Marketplace offers certain Rhode Island primary care providers the ability to choose among a selection of pre-qualified electronic health record (EHR) software vendors and technical service consultants.

The Marketplace is only one of the REC's services. In its mission to help 1,000 Rhode Island primary care providers achieve Meaningful Use of an EHR, the REC offers individualized support and guidance from an assigned REC Relationship Manager, cost/benefit analyses, educational seminars, and other services.

The REC's goal is for its provider members to become "meaningful users" of EHR technology. "Meaningful Use" refers to the federal criteria for using EHRs in a way that demonstrates improved quality of care. Meeting these criteria also makes providers eligible for RI REC subsidies and incentive payments from Medicare, Medicaid and others.

"We understand the importance of Meaningful Use to our physician community and to healthcare in Rhode Island," said Laura Adams, RIQI President and CEO. "Our new Regional Extension Center program, our national insight, and local expertise allow us to strongly support providers in achieving Meaningful Use by offering guidance every step of the way."

The Marketplace offers two types of vendors: EHR software vendors and technical service consultants. To qualify, Marketplace applicants were evaluated based on business stability, strategy to meet meaningful use objectives, experience in the RI EHR market (allowing providers to have local peers to consult with and learn from), and a commitment to offer discounted pricing. Marketplace users will save time and money and avoid common problems with implementation.

The REC pre-qualified EHR software vendors include: Allscripts; Blackstone Valley Community Health Care, Inc., a NextGen partner; EHS Medical; Ingenix; NextGen; and Polaris Medical Management. In addition, final contract negotiations are underway with: GE Healthcare; eClinicalWorks; and Athenahealth.

The REC pre-qualified technical service consultants include: Arcadia Solutions; Blackstone Community Health Care, Inc.; Coastal Medical; Concordant, Inc.; Electronic Health Records of Rhode Island; General Technology Corp. (d/b/a CompUtopia); Lifespan/Physicians PSO; Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative; NetCenergy; Polaris Medical Management; Quality Partners of Rhode Island; and The Ficus Group.

The REC's "vendor-neutral" Marketplace allows providers to easily review and compare EHR products and service options to determine the EHR software and consulting services that are best for their practice. Depending on where practices and providers are in the process of implementing or upgrading an EHR, they may need one or more types of service. REC relationship managers provide individualized free support and guidance in decision-making and project management. They coordinate needed services and help a practice submit requests for price quotes from vendors.

"An electronic system is not just about the money, it is primarily about quality," said Thomas Bledsoe, MD, a Rhode Island internist who implemented an EHR in March 2009. "Provision of modern quality care is virtually impossible without this kind of tool."

On November 17, 2010, the REC will hold its first Health IT Expo. This event gives providers the opportunity to speak with vendors, test software, and learn from other physicians' experiences with EHRs. In January 2011, RI REC will re-open the application process for vendors and consultants who wish to be included in the Marketplace.

Enrollment in the REC is free for Priority PCPs, whether or not they have an EHR already. Priority PCPs are physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and others who specialize in adolescent medicine, family medicine, general practice, internal medicine, obstetrics, gynecology, geriatrics, or pediatrics and practice in a location with 10 or fewer providers, at a community health center, public hospital, or other setting that cares for underserved populations. Later in the program, the RI REC will become available to non-priority providers and specialists.

RI REC is one of 60 RECs across the country that provides support to primary care providers (PCPs) in their efforts to achieve meaningful use of certified EHR technology. Rhode Island providers have a unique opportunity to be a part of something very exciting, as RIQI is the only organization nationally to be granted all three of the major American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants for health information technology. Interested providers can visit the RI REC's website, [www.DocEHRTalk.org](http://www.DocEHRTalk.org), to enroll and to learn about vendor Marketplace products and services.

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**About the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI):**

Founded in 2001, the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) is a collaboration of leaders in the Rhode Island community who share the intent to substantively improve the healthcare system in the state. The collaboration includes CEOs of hospitals, health insurers, and businesses, along with leaders of consumer groups, academia, and government. RIQI's mission is to significantly improve the quality, safety, and value of healthcare in Rhode Island. RIQI is the Governor-designated sole Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) for Rhode Island, chosen to coordinate the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE). As the RHIO, RIQI is charged with bringing together healthcare stakeholders within the state and governing HIE among them for the purpose of improving health outcomes in the community.