



Contacts: Joyce Beck, Thayer County Health Services, 402-768-6041
Will Ross, Redwood MedNet, 707-462,6369

Thayer County Health Services and Redwood MedNet Demonstrate “Network of Networks” Using Mirth Corporation’s Meaningful Use Exchange

Two Rural Health Information Exchanges Cross-Connect Their Networks to Make Patient Information Available to Healthcare Providers Upon Request, Where and When It’s Needed

HEBRON, NE, and UKIAH, CA--(March 1, 2010) - Two rural Health Information Exchanges announced a successful demonstration of “the Health Internet” -- a network of networks through which patient data can be safely and rapidly exchanged to place critical information at clinician fingertips where and when it is needed. By using the open source CONNECT software developed by the Federal Health Architecture program under the Office of the National Coordinator, California-based Redwood MedNet and Nebraska-based Thayer County Health Services securely bridged their respective Health Information Exchanges. They safely and successfully exchanged live patient records -- the first such demonstration to take place between health information exchanges in the U.S. using the CONNECT software. The successful demonstration showed how patient laboratory information, medication history, and continuity of care documents (CCDs) can be made available in real-time to improve patient care and eliminate costly duplication of services such as laboratory tests.

“When doctors in the Emergency Departments and Urgent Care clinics have access to patient allergy and medication data we reduce adverse events and keep patients safer,” said Joyce Beck, CEO of Thayer County Health Services. “When community-based physicians have access to recent lab and test results from across town or across the country we eliminate costly and wasteful duplication, saving everyone time and money. Our demonstration shows we have the technology -- and no more excuses for not making this happen for our patients.”

“Patients in our rural north coast region travel south to the Bay Area to see specialists,” said Will Ross, project director at Redwood MedNet. “And visitors to our wine country and beautiful coastline, where tourism is a major industry, sometimes need healthcare services while they are here. Our simple demonstration of cross country health information exchange shows that American healthcare can soon begin to operate like every other service industry by making appropriate information available to the health professionals who need it in secure electronic formats. As we are all patients at some time, we all will benefit from better care that the ‘Health Internet’ will enable.”

The cross country health data demonstration began on January 29th with a patient office visit at Thayer County Health Services. The office visit was documented by an encounter note listing current medications and a laboratory test. The next week the patient was on vacation on the north coast of California. The patient scheduled an office visit on February 5th at Alliance Medical Center, a community clinic in Healdsburg, California. At Alliance, Redwood MedNet enabled the clinic staff to download the prior patient medication history and lab test from Thayer County Health Services in Nebraska. In Healdsburg, the Alliance physician noted the patient's prior lab test and medication history from Nebraska, and decided that a different laboratory test was needed. The electronic lab test result was available 45 minutes later via Redwood MedNet, and the test result was also instantly available via the CONNECT gateway at the patient's primary care provider in Nebraska.

"This demonstration shows that the Health Internet is here," said Joyce Beck. "And it shows that little critical access hospitals like Thayer County have an affordable option for health information exchange by using the CONNECT software gateway." Both Thayer County Health Services and Redwood MedNet are participating in the CONNECT demonstration in Booth 233 at the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) annual conference in Atlanta on March 1, 2010 through March 3, 2010.

#

About Thayer County Health Services & SENHIE

Thayer County Health Services (THCS) is a 19 bed Critical Access Hospital and rural health clinics in Southeast Nebraska. As a result of a FLEX-CAH HIT grant THCS became entirely electronic and formed Southeast Nebraska Health Information Exchange (SENHIE). SENHIE is a leader in EMR adoption in rural Nebraska. SENHIE has documented the positive patient safety outcomes as a result of EMR adoption is and a strong advocate for EMR adoption and nationwide interoperability. For more information, see www.thayercountyhealth.com.

About Redwood MedNet

Redwood MedNet was formed by local physicians as a community nonprofit in 2004 in Mendocino County, California. Redwood MedNet began delivering electronic laboratory results in 2008 in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, expanded to radiology results in 2009, and in 2010 will expand to electronic prescriptions and patient medication histories. Redwood MedNet also plans to expand into neighboring counties to help other facilities achieve "Meaningful Use." A leader in health data delivery for small hospitals, small clinical practices, public health and ancillary health data services, the annual conference and monthly webinars offered by Redwood MedNet educate hundreds of regional health care professionals. For more information, see www.redwoodmednet.org.