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NEWS RELEASE

Arizona's Statewide HIE Eliminates Participation Fees For Community Providers

For immediate release:

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Community providers in The Network, Arizona's statewide HIE operated by Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC), will pay no participation fees beginning October 1, 2015. The Board of The Network, in a late August vote, has adjusted fees for all participating entities for the statewide HIE, eliminating the fee for community providers effective October 1, 2015.

The Network launched a new operating platform and services on April 1, 2015, based on a funding model where hospitals, health plans and community providers split the cost of operations, with hospitals and health plans funding the majority of operating costs and community providers funding a smaller portion. Under the new funding model for the 2016 budget, approved at a Board meeting in late August, hospitals and health plans will now cover the portion of operating expenses previously covered by community providers. Community providers include federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, primary care and specialty providers in private practices, public health, correctional facilities and first responders.

These funding decisions were made as part of the budget review process for 2016, according to Melissa Kotrys, CEO of AzHeC and The Network. Kotrys noted although hospitals and health plans are bearing a greater percentage of the costs, participation fees overall are going down for 2016. "Participation fees are based on the total number of participating entities and organizations," Kotrys said. "Although hospitals and health plans are taking on a greater percent of operating costs, hospitals and health plans will see lowers fees in 2016 because the total number of participating hospitals and health plans has increased."

Frank Marini, CIO of Tucson Medical Center and board chairman of The Network, stressed the importance of provider participation and provider data as key factors in the Board's decision. "Although we have seen steady growth in provider participation, the Board wanted to eliminate a key barrier to provider participation in The Network," Marini said. "With more Arizona providers participating in ACOs and all providers facing a future of value-based reimbursement, it is increasingly important to improve care coordination and maintain more comprehensive patient records through participation in the statewide HIE," Marini said. "We not only want to remove a critical barrier to participation, we also recognize the value of securely sharing valuable patient data with community providers," Marini added.

Network Services for Participants

Under the new operating platform and new services of The Network, services for participants such as community providers are bundled, with the following services available to all participants:

- **Bidirectional Exchange** – A bidirectional connection between The Network and a certified EHR allowing access to patient health information by all authorized Network users.
- **Provider and Payer Portals** – Patient clinical information and beneficiary clinical information can be accessed via these web-based portals, allowing authorized users access to records one patient or beneficiary at a time.
- **Direct Secure Email** – A HIPAA compliant, encrypted, standards-based application enabling secure point-to-point sending and receiving of routine information such as referrals, simple clinical messages and test results.
- **Alerts and Notifications** – Alerts and notifications of hospital ED, ambulatory and inpatient registrations, discharges and transfers as well as notifications of lab, radiology and transcription results and reports.
- **Public Health Reporting** – A single connection or electronic gateway for Network participants to submit state and federally required public health information from their certified electronic health record (EHR) system.
- **eHealth Exchange** – A secure electronic exchange of patient information via the national eHealth Exchange network, allowing participants to query and share on their patients with HIEs in other states and federal agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security Administration.

Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC)

Arizona Health-e Connection is a non-profit, public-private partnership that drives the adoption of health information technology (HIT) and advances the secure and private sharing of electronic health information exchange (HIE). Through statewide education, coordination and collaboration, AzHeC promotes the innovative use of HIT and HIE to achieve the Triple Aim of better care, better outcomes and lower costs.

AzHeC operates The Network, Arizona's non-profit statewide HIE that enables improvements in care coordination and quality by electronically linking health care organizations through a single connection, filling gaps in patient information across the state. The Network serves as a community *data trustee* and a *network of networks* that allows participants to save time and resources and create a more comprehensive patient record, providing the right information at the right time and place.