



Innovation Valley
Health Information Network

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 20, 2006

CONTACT:
Alan Hill
Innovation Valley Health
Information Network
(865) 522-0360

Jennifer Wiggins
AkinsCrisp Public Strategies
(865) 680-1457

**Innovation Valley Health Information Network Announces
Board of Directors and Hosts Community Briefings**
Meetings Aimed to Inform the Public of Healthcare Network Benefits

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – The Innovation Valley Health Information Network (IVhin), hosted a series of community briefings in Knoxville and Oak Ridge to inform various stakeholder groups about the Innovation Valley Health Information Network (IVhin) and to officially introduce the non-profit organization’s board of directors. Formerly named the East Tennessee Health Information Network, IVhin is a revolutionary initiative that will allow healthcare facilities in the 16-county East Tennessee region to share patient information through a secure, de-centralized network. In conjunction with the Patient Safety Institute (PSI), a national organization based out of Plano, Texas, this initiative is a proposed national model for a consumer-driven, financially self-sustainable, community healthcare collaboration. During the briefings, Alan Hill, Executive Director of IVhin introduced Johnny Walker, CEO for PSI.

“Johnny has more than fifteen years of experience in healthcare information technology and has headed up PSI for six years,” said Alan Hill. “And during that time, he’s been the champion of a national vision for consumer-driven health information interoperability. What IVhin will do for East Tennesseans is to enable member patients the ability to have their current and historic medical information made immediately available to health providers in the network. With the success of this model first in East Tennessee, our goal is that it will be implemented as a national program.”

The meetings also served as an important stepping stone for IVhin in its community outreach efforts and the educational process about its program. “In order for this national model to be successful, the community must be involved—everyone from patients and doctors to major hospitals, pharmacies, large employers and insurance carriers,” said Walker.

Alan Hill added, “With this initial community launch we want to open dialogue with our board to all parts of our community. We would like for the healthcare community to let us know of their interest in participation and we value their feedback as to how we develop and roll this out to the community. The newly formed representative-based board represents consumers, physicians, health facilities, employers, and the community at-large. These series of meetings are the first of many sessions where we will be engaging our community for input and feedback. Think of it as a follow on to the Nine Counties, One Vision project where we are now moving from planning to action.” Board member Merritt Smith said, “I wanted to join the board to be able to represent the needs of senior citizens in our region and I look forward to visiting with consumers to promote the IVhin program and to gather input from a variety of individuals.”

IVhin is a three-phase program that was launched in January, 2006 after PSI was awarded a 12-month grant totaling \$985,000 from the Physician’s Foundation for Health Systems Excellence, a Boston-based non-profit group, to develop the first phase of a self-sustaining Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO).

“Knoxville competed for the opportunity to be involved in the grant process with three other finalist cities including Chicago, Denver and Seattle,” said Walker. “But we ultimately chose this region because of the regional collaboration already in place, the significant research and science resources including the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y-12 National Security Complex and the area’s notoriety for successful testing of national models. Ultimately, the choice seemed logical: the Tennessee Valley Corridor has the technologies, research capabilities and collaborative spirit needed for the success.”

Phase two is expected to begin in the Fourth Quarter of 2006 and run for about two years expanding the system to patients and providers throughout the 16-county Knoxville/Oak Ridge Innovation Valley. The third phase is the continuation and expansion of the network as an active, on-going, financially sustained network.

IVhin implements state-of-the-art technology to improve patient safety, care and quality at the point of service while reducing costs. The network began as a coalition of four founding, local hospital systems – Baptist Health System, Covenant Health, St. Mary’s and University Health System. Blount Memorial Hospital in Maryville has already agreed to join as well as several large physician groups and health centers in the area. “Having the participation of all the acute care hospitals in the 16 county region will be critical to our success and we have a good start with the five largest systems out of the gate, said John Schlenker, CIO of St. Mary’s Health System. “When patients receive care in different health care settings, this information will be readily available to physicians and caregivers inside and outside of the hospital.”

Coined as the “Google of Healthcare,” the IVhin network will ultimately resemble today’s financial banking cards in which patients will present an IVhin Healthcare Card to allow access to their private health records during a visit to the doctor. Through a secure, password protected Internet-based network, doctors will have instant access to patient histories, including recent diagnostic tests.

“IVhin participants can provide their physicians with their IVhin card at the point of service and the doctor will in turn use it to access that patient’s medical history,” said David Gerkin, M.D. an IVhin board member. “From there, physicians will be able to review information such as allergies, recent diagnostic test results, previous problems and diagnoses, and even a current list of prescribed medications. And the patients will really like the ability to access their personal health record and provide comments and additional information to their providers from their personal computers.”

In addition to the immediate benefits from IVhin of access to patient history for patients and authorized providers resulting in a significant increase in the quality and safety of care, costs to both the insurance carriers and ultimately the patient are expected to decrease.

"With accurate and up-to-date health information, better decisions can be made at the point of service," said Kenneth Reese, M.D., an IVhin Board Member. "Your physician's ability to immediately see most, if not all, of your test results, should improve the quality of your care."

Joining IVhin as 2006 board members are: Sondra Bridgford, chief executive officer for the Knoxville Academy of Medicine; Roger Brooksbank, M.D., regional medical director for Team Health; Douglas “Buddy” Fain, chief information officer for University Health System; Mark Field, vice president of membership for the Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership; Tennessee State Guard Brigadier General David Gerkin, M.D., medical director for Tennessee Valley Eye Center and editor of *Tennessee Medicine*; Henrietta Grant, community volunteer and retired educator; Chester Maze, senior vice president information services for Baptist Health System; James McTyre, pastor for Lake Hills Presbyterian Church; Kenneth Reese, M.D. Internal Medicine, Summit Medical Group; John Schlenker, senior vice president and chief information officer for St. Mary’s Health System; Merritt Smith, retired business executive and executive committee member for the Knoxville/Knox County Council on Aging; and Mike Ward, chief information officer for Covenant Health,

For more information about the Innovation Valley Health Information Network, call (865) 522-0360.

-END-