



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phoenix, AZ, Aug. 28, 2007

Executive director named to guide statewide health information technology effort

In a move that will bring Arizona closer to transforming health care for all residents, the Arizona Health-e Connection today announced the selection of Brad Tritle as the organization's first executive director.

Tritle's appointment is part of the Arizona Health-e Connection's plan to advance the delivery of health care in Arizona by promoting a new health information infrastructure across the state, including electronic medical records. Widespread use of health information technology (HIT) could save lives and the state's health care system approximately \$2.6 billion annually.

"The Arizona Health-e Connection has been making great headway in establishing an electronic health records infrastructure for our state," said David Landrith, vice president of the Arizona Medical Association and chair of the Arizona Health-e Connection. "Brad has the right skills and private/public experience to help us achieve our objective and directive of electronic medical records for all Arizonans."

Landrith said widespread and effective use of health information technology could save the U.S. health system as much as \$140 billion per year -- \$2.6 billion in Arizona -- and save lives by greatly improving the way medical care is managed, greatly reducing preventable medical errors, and lowering death rates from chronic disease.

Tritle most recently worked for the state Government Information Technology Agency (GITA), where he launched a grant program targeting the development of information technology capabilities by rural health care providers. Tritle also has extensive experience working for private sector technology companies.

AzHeC is a non-profit, private-public partnership formed in January 2007 to coordinate the establishment of HIT and electronic medical records for every Arizonan by 2010. The organization evolved from a Governor-initiated, state-led program called upon to comprehensively review issues and develop recommendations, to an implementation organization directed by a very diverse, private-public partnership. The organization's board represents a broad statewide public/private collaboration—the largest effort of its kind currently being pursued in the US. AzHeC includes executives from such organizations as the Arizona Medical Association, Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association, the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, Intel, CIGNA Healthcare of Arizona, APS, Banner Health, AHCCCS, and 13 other public or private organizations (a complete list appears at the end of this release).

Up until Tritle's selection as executive director, Elizabeth McNamee, program manager at St. Luke's Health Initiatives, was the interim director of AzHeC, and worked tirelessly to build the public/private coalition that exists today. Tritle's selection is the result of several-months-long competitive process that involved 40 candidates who were interviewed and assessed by the AzHeC board.

AzHeC's purpose is to achieve the goal of interoperable electronic health records, available at the point of care, for every Arizonan by 2010 in order to increase the quality and decrease the costs of health care. Through intense research, public input, and collaborative discussion, the Arizona Health-e Connection Roadmap was established, outlining various steps and suggested direction for reaching the goal.

Last year, Governor Napolitano and the legislature set aside \$1.5 million to initiate seven different technology projects involving rural health care providers. In addition to coordination with these activities, AzHeC is also working closely with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) on an innovative Medicaid electronic health record project, and the Southern Arizona Health Information Exchange (SAHIE) on their efforts as the first Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) in Arizona.

Members of the AzHec board include: Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association, Arizona Medical Association, Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association, Arizona Pharmacy Alliance, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, Health Net of Arizona, Inc., Schaller Anderson, United Health Care, CIGNA Healthcare of Arizona, Arizona Public Service, Intel, Banner Health, Carondelet Health Network, Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, University of Arizona College of Medicine, Government Information Technology Agency, Arizona Office of the Governor, Sonora Quest Laboratory, Arizona State University, Your Partners in Quality, LLC, Southern Arizona Health Information Exchange.

Background documents can be obtained from AzHeC's website at www.azhec.org.

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