



central illinois
health information exchange

September 14, 2012

Mr. Cory Verblen
Communications Manager
Illinois Office of Health Information Technology

Re: Letter of Intent for HIE White Space Grant

Dear Cory:

This letter is to inform you that Central Illinois Health Information Exchange (CIHIE) intends to apply for the HIE White Space Grant, offered by the Illinois Office of Health Information Technology. Our FEIN is 27-4812632 and we are organized as a 501(c)3.

As an HIE White Space Program Grantee, CIHIE would be committed to meeting all programmatic requirements, including:

- Connecting a minimum of 50 eligible Illinois-licensed health care providers in a minimum of five unaffiliated Illinois white space entities;
- Providing Direct-compliant HIE services to all of the white space entities identified in our application within 6 months;
- Ensuring HIE connectivity for these entities within 1 year, including operational integration with the master directory and other statewide services;
- Provision of technical assistance and training to the providers to establish connectivity and accelerate their utilization of HIE;
- Submission of a complete work plan within 30 days of award notification; and
- Completion of required agreements and reporting requirements.

Attached you will find our responses to the questions outlined in the RFP, as well as numerous letters of support for our proposal.

From the very beginning of our work in Central Illinois, our leadership has been intently committed to the inclusion of healthcare providers of all types and sizes. We are proposing to utilize white space funding to accelerate the engagement and connectivity of long-term care providers across our region.

We are excited about this opportunity and look forward to your response. Please feel free to contact me at 309-202-1599 or via email at jduling@cihie.org should you have any questions or wish to discuss any element of this letter of intent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Duling', is written over a printed name and title.

Joy Duling
Executive Director

1. Proposal Scope

Central Illinois Health Information Exchange (CIHIE) will utilize White Space Funding to establish an expert-led *Long-Term and Post-Acute Care Affinity Group* which will be open to ALL long-term care providers that are interested in Central Illinois' regional HIE connectivity.

As a cohort, these providers will receive education and support on HIE visioning and readiness planning. Those determined to be at advanced stages of readiness will become part of an initial connectivity wave. Their experience with the process will be communicated back to the overall group who will be working together to queue the next wave of providers, provide input on the future funding model, and spread the word about the initial wave's lessons learned and best practices.

We estimate that the initial connectivity wave will include 5-8 unaffiliated organizations and will well exceed the minimum of fifty licensed healthcare providers. However, in addition to this full connectivity of the most-ready long term care facilities, our approach also ensures that:

- *an unlimited number* of long-term care providers can receive much needed HIT education, technical assistance and support;
- *an unlimited number* of long-term care providers can be granted "look-up" capability for CIHIE's aggregate community health record – which provides them with a more complete picture of a patient's health history and current status;
- *an unlimited number* of long-term care providers can begin participating in Direct messaging services, providing the capability to electronically coordinate care with other participating healthcare providers, even if they are still on paper and not yet ready for EMR interoperability.

CIHIE utilizes allcharts™ as our HIE solution, which is our branded name for software provided to us by Informatics Corporation of America (ICA). During CIHIE's vendor selection process, we emphasized our region's strong desire to implement technology that would meet an organization at their current level of technology and be able to grow with them as they advance their systems.

As a result, our HIE solution is flexible, utilizing three potential pathways for organizations to participate:

- **Care Collaborate** – which allows CIHIE participants that do not have an ONC certified EHR to connect using HL7 data feeds directly from their legacy systems. The data is stored in segregated "vaults" such that data from one participant is not commingled with that of other participants. Care Collaborate also provides a web portal through which participants without an ONC certified EHR could search for patient records and view them.
- **Care Exchange** – which allows CIHIE participants that have an ONC certified EHR to register C32 formatted documents within the HIE so that they can then be searched for and viewed from within another participant's ONC certified EHR or in the Care Collaborate portal.

- **Care Connect** – which allows our participants to send and receive ONC Direct-compliant secure messages from within their Direct-capable EHR or from the allcharts portal (where participants without an ONC certified EHR can attach CCD's from a patient chart to send to other providers). Whether thru allcharts™ or through their own EHR, providers will be able to send secure messages to any Direct participant within CIHIE or within the larger ILHIE community.

On September 5, 2012, we successfully deployed a software upgrade which provides our users with Direct-compliant messaging.

2. **Connection to ILHIE**

As an alpha partner for the Illinois Health Information Exchange (ILHIE), CIHIE has already begun the process of coordinating the connectivity of our regional exchange with the State's architecture.

Per the guidance delivered in the ILHIE Partner On-Boarding Handbook, CIHIE intends to connect with ILHIE using the outlined IHE standardized transactions and profiles, as well as all meeting all technical requirements for C32 content and the management of authorization, access, and consent.

As some of these standards are not mature, CIHIE is committed to working with its solution vendor (ICA) and ILHIE to comply with all specifications as soon as possible and to continue working with ILHIE and its solution vendor (ISC) to implement changes to these technologies as their associated standards evolve and as ILHIE requires.

3. **Delivery of Care**

As many Central Illinois hospitals, along with others statewide and nationally, begin to feel negative financial impact from readmission penalties, the need to improve care coordination is urgent. Improving the communication that happens at points-of-hand-off, as well as ensuring that the right information is available to those who need to later follow-up, is a win-win-win for hospitals, long-term care providers, and patients.

The software solution that CIHIE uses was originally conceived by a dozen clinicians who were gathered together to discuss ways of improving the inefficient paperwork and communication processes for Vanderbilt Medical Center (VMC), one of the country's leading research and teaching hospitals with nearly 120 affiliated clinics and physicians' practices. The goal was to find a system to organize and integrate all patient records and ultimately improve the delivery of patient care.

That initial focus on the needs of clinicians has consistently been carried through to the software as it exists today. The ability to tangibly impact the delivery of care was one of the strong influences in Central Illinois' selection of Informatics Corporation of America as our HIE vendor.

In addition to software that focuses on delivery of care, CIHIE also uniquely utilizes an implementation model that places clinical engagement at the center of activity. CIHIE's Clinical Application Specialists are registered nurses with extensive experience in Central Illinois healthcare. Not only have they been

involved in our HIE implementations for the past year, but they also have been working with the small independent practices, rural health centers, health departments and critical access hospitals that are receiving services through IL-HITREC on the steps required to adopt and implement an EHR and ultimately achieve meaningful use. Their ability to skillfully walk a small clinical practice through the process of workflow analysis and readiness planning has been instrumental to CIHIE's success.

As part of the proposed work with long-term care facilities, CIHIE will develop a structured education program designed to address 5 key challenge areas often cited by the long-term care community:

- Lack of strategic planning with respect to HIT/HIE;
- Undervaluation of the impact of HIT/HIE in improving quality;
- Lack of time and HIT/HIE knowledge;
- Underestimation of change management needs;
- Fear of investing in technology in a changing environment.

4. Experience

CIHIE began as an incubated project under the auspices of Quality Quest for Health of Illinois, a nonprofit regional healthcare improvement collaborative headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. With funding provided by the State of Illinois to support twelve months of planning, Quality Quest convened key stakeholders from four Central Illinois trading areas to engage in the HIE planning process. During the course of that twelve month period, we had more than two hundred people involved on a voluntary basis from a diverse array of healthcare organizations across our twenty county region, including hospitals, health departments, federally qualified health centers, critical access hospitals, independent physician offices, consumers, etc.

After the initial twelve month period, CIHIE was successful in securing one-time investments from Charter Members who wished to see the regional exchange be formally established. Organizationally, CIHIE was established as an independent, 501(c)3 nonprofit with its own Board and separate financials.

CIHIE celebrated its "Grand Opening" in January 2012 with several showcase utilizations of messaging technology. In June 2012, we went live with several hospital data feeds. As of the end of August, we had nearly 160,000 patient records in the system with an opt-out rate holding lower than .03%.

CIHIE is widely recognized as a leader amongst our regional HIE peers. We have been successful in maintaining active engagement of diverse participants, ranging from the largest multi-hospital system in downstate Illinois, to the smallest critical access hospital, to federally qualified health centers, to independent specialty providers. Our solution is affordable. Our team is clinically attuned. Our approach emphasizes the involvement of all in creating an effective, sustainable product that overcomes local competition to achieve tangible community good.

5. Partner Organizations

CIHIE proudly continues our tradition of partnering with organizations, large and small, to accomplish our goals. Current members stand ready to help us spread the word about the new Affinity Group and will encourage their community partners to participate in the Exchange. Associations such as the Affordable Assisted Living Coalition (representing 90+% of providers involved in Illinois Supportive Living Program) and the Illinois Health Care Association (representing more than 375 long-term care providers and programs in Illinois) have expressed interest and support. Long-term care facilities are eagerly embracing the opportunity to become engaged. Organizations such as the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network have indicated a desire to explore resource sharing and cross-referencing where appropriate.

It is our intention to work with these organizations in the weeks ahead to fully articulate anticipated roles and responsibilities as part of our planning for the full application.

In the interim, a sampling of support letters has been provided from the following organizations:

- Affordable Assisted Living Coalition (AALC)
- BMA Management, LTD
- Christian Homes, Inc
- Dr. John Warner Hospital
- Decatur Memorial Hospital
- Easter Seals
- Illinois Health Care Association (IHCA)
- Oak Wood Estates
- OSF Healthcare System
- Quality Quest for Health of Illinois
- RuthAnn Lipic, Consumer Advisory Council
- University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria (UICOMP)