



Cory Verblen
Communications Manager
Illinois Office of Health Information Technology

September 13, 2012

Dear Mr. Verblen:

Heartland Health Outreach (HHO) submits this letter of intent on behalf of the Alliance of Chicago Community Health Services (Alliance) to apply for an HIE White Space Grant. HHO and its partner the Alliance intend to apply for funding to connect white space entities directly to the ILHIE network, with the intention of connecting a minimum of 50 eligible licensed health care providers in a minimum of five unaffiliated white space entities to the ILHIE network within one year of the grant award date.

HHO is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) and a 501 (c) 3 (FEIN: 1363775696), as are most of the proposed partners. All proposed partners represent Safety Net health centers in the Chicago area.

The mission of Heartland Health Outreach is to improve the health of vulnerable individuals and communities lacking access to health care through the provision of culturally competent, multidisciplinary services designed to prevent illness and improve physical, mental and social well-being, and through advocacy that promotes the human right to comprehensive, integrated systems of care. The health care partner of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights, HHO was founded in 1985 as a Health Care for the Homeless demonstration project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust. Today, it is a community health organization dedicated to addressing the lack of quality care for Chicago's many disenfranchised populations, including people who are homeless, poor, HIV positive, mentally ill, addicted, and immigrants or refugees. Our services include primary care, mental health, oral health, and substance use treatment and services for low-income, homeless, immigrant, and refugee populations throughout the Chicago region. Through services delivered at our site in Uptown, in residential locations, and through outreach programs at more than 120 area homeless shelters and other community settings, Heartland Health Outreach annually serves the health needs of thousands of medically underserved people. Our diverse programs and services fill gaps in the region's health care system and set the standard for inclusive, multidisciplinary treatment.

HHO is a founding member of the Alliance of Chicago, a health center-controlled network that provides electronic medical record service to HHO and other entities named in this LOI. Cofounders of the Alliance of Chicago include Erie Family Health Center, Howard Brown Health Center, and the Near North Health Service Corporation: note that although we are partners in, and collective owners of, the Alliance, we are all separate entities that do not share common ownership or control, through corporate governance or contractual arrangements: none of us controls or is controlled by another entity in the group.

Our well established partnership with both the Alliance and its partners in Chicago provides both the HIT experience and expertise necessary to achieve the interoperability and technology necessary for health information exchange. The Alliance of Chicago hosts the EHR technology and application, but each community health center has a unique database and no information is shared across the network or with any local hospitals: the EHRs are unique and private to each health center. As experienced users of the EHR, we and the health centers referenced below are positioned from a technology perspective to meet the requirements of this grant. Even with the existing relationships, integrating and sharing information across centers that serve diverse populations (especially the transient and homeless patients) will be challenging and will provide a unique demonstration of the benefits of HIE.

In order to meet program requirements specified by the HIE White Space Grant Program:

- The Alliance and HHO will partner with six unaffiliated community health organizations and more than 200 Illinois- licensed health care providers (see table below).
- The Alliance and HHO and the other entities plan to use ILHIE network services. All entities have an ONC-certified EHR.
- All white space entities will be connected to the ILHIE network within one year of grant award date.
- The Alliance of Chicago will provide experience and technical assistance to all the entities to connect to HIE and accelerate utilization.
- The Alliance and HHO will submit a work plan within 30 days of notice of award date; enter into a data sharing agreement with the ILHIE Authority; enter into a grant agreement with the State of Illinois; and submit quarterly reports.

Providers will include physicians, advance practice nurses, registered nurses, behavioral health providers, licensed clinical social workers, dentists, and physician assistants. The table below offers a snapshot of the participating health centers.

Health Center	# providers	# sites	# patients	# encounters/yr	Special populations
Erie Family Health Center	97	11	33,350	156,016	Latino, immigrant
Heartland Health Outreach	14	120 (includes outreach sites)	11,767	18,342	Refugee, homeless, HIV/AIDS
Heartland International Health Center	14	9	9,899	46,000	Immigrant, refugee, low income
Howard Brown Health Center	19	3	6,938	21,799	LGBT, HIV
Near North Health Services Corporation	29	8	31,652	89,871	African American
Night Ministry	4	1 (mobile van)	2,200	5,500	Homeless
PCC Wellness Health Center	64	9	35,482	115,172	African American, Latino, homeless
TOTAL	241	>161	131,288	452,700	

Source: Electronic medical records hosted by the Alliance

We will use the ILHIE network exclusively to initially connect white space entities to the ILHIE network. Further, to assist in the utilization of HIE services in the delivery of care, HHO and partner organizations will work closely with the health center controlled network, the Alliance of Chicago to:

- Develop interfaces to transmit the Continuity of Care Document (CCD/ HITSP C23) from each entity's separate database to ILHIE;
- Provide connectivity technology for EMR interface engine to ILHIE;
- Support necessary workflow to enable patient consent specific to each entity's release of information policy;
- Develop EMR content as necessary to support the consent process and documentation;
- Develop EMR content for tracking information exchange and audit;
- Provide optimization support to insure a complete and up-to-date CCD;
- Support workflow changes specific to each entity to facilitate transitions of care; and
- Analyze the impact of accepting both solicited and unsolicited inbound CCD files to the host EMR.

The Alliance of Chicago is nationally recognized as a Health Center Controlled Network, having supported a successful collaboration that includes 11 health care organizations in Chicago and an additional 21 in ten other states. The success of the Network has relied on the ability of the Alliance to secure and sustain a functional partnership of independent organizations, to secure and manage revenue from multiple sources, and to design and carry out complex implementation plans centrally within the participant organizations. Its success has also relied on the Alliance's

technical ability to deploy and leverage health information technology and implement successful data strategies. The Alliance has existed since 1997, when it received funding from the federal Bureau of Primary Health Care under the Integrated Services Development Initiative. The Alliance is a Low-Profit Limited Liability Corporation (L3C) and is entirely owned by four 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations.

As a network of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) all on a shared, centrally hosted electronic health record (EHR) system, the Alliance of Chicago is uniquely positioned to develop and implement a multifaceted, technology-based model for improving health information exchange in the city of Chicago.

On behalf of its FQHCs, the Alliance provides a centrally hosted ambulatory EHR (GE Centricity Practice Solution™), with the following benefits:

- Procurement and management of EHR software licenses;
- Customized clinical content for FQHCs;
- Construction of interfaces including laboratory and practice management;
- Implementation support/project management;
- Centrally hosted services in a secure level-3 facility;
- Intrusion prevention and detection; System monitoring;
- Help desk and user support;
- Data warehouse and reporting of national performance measures (including immunization rates);
- User board infrastructure for guidance and change request management; and
- Post EHR optimization services.

We look forward to the opportunity to harness our relationships with the Alliance and the other health care centers to improve communication and accessibility that will lead to better outcomes for people who are marginalized and often disenfranchised from health care.

Sincerely,

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