The title of this project is The Illinois Health Information Exchange.

Illinois proposes to enter into a four-year Cooperative Agreement with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology to promote health information technology in Illinois. Illinois' application for federal funding pursuant to this opportunity seeks to fund planning and implementation efforts to create a state-level health information exchange (HIE) that will facilitate the widespread exchange of clinical health information among providers, patients and public health entities throughout the state. The goals of this project are to support the adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records to improve health care quality and outcomes, improve patient safety, reduce health disparities, reduce medical errors and duplicative services, enhance patient care coordination, enhance public health and disease surveillance and control the cost of health care.

The project will result in the development of a state-level HIE that will allow health care providers to exchange clinical information, such as medication histories and test results, access it at the point of care and make better informed decisions with their patients. It will provide vital statewide information quickly to public health officials, significantly improving efforts to protect and promote public health. To maximize efficiency and effectively promote the use of electronic health records among providers, the Illinois Health Information Exchange project will coordinate efforts with federally-funded Regional Extension Centers and broadband deployment initiatives. The project will use federal funds and state matching dollars to develop capacity within the five domains supporting the program: governance; finance; technical infrastructure; business and technical operations; and legal/policy.

In cooperation with a broad group of health care stakeholders, Illinois has already begun developing capacity across the five domains supporting the program. In February, 2009, the State authorized a $3 million planning grant program to promote the development of HIE. The program is encouraging stakeholder participation, provider collaboration, adoption of electronic health records and governance capacity in each of 16 Medical Trading Areas throughout the state. A statewide HIE Advisory Committee, comprised of individual and institutional healthcare providers, consumers, payers, universities, public health departments and State officials has been meeting since 2007 to provide broad-based stakeholder input regarding the State's plans for HIE. The State has conducted an initial environmental scan and survey of providers and determined that while adoption of electronic health records is slightly higher than the national average, significant barriers to HIE must be addressed in order to meet federal timelines for adoption and meaningful use.

Ongoing State efforts to promote health information technology and carry out planning activities related to the HIE will be administered through a newly designated Office of Health Information Technology within the Office of the Governor. In addition, the State plans to pursue legislation to create a public-private entity, which will operate the state-level HIE following a thorough, statewide planning phase involving all health care stakeholders.

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