



For Immediate Release

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HealthInfoNet, The Rhode Island Quality Institute, and VITL Announce New England Region Health Information Exchange (HIE) Collaboration

New Gloucester, Maine, Providence, Rhode Island, and Williston, Vermont (June 21, 2022) – HealthInfoNet (Maine), The Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI), and VITL (Vermont) today announced an innovative collaboration aimed at advancing interstate interoperability to improve population health and patient care in and across each of the New England communities they serve. Bound by a common mission to operate their states' respective Health Information Exchange (HIE) infrastructures, the three non-profit organizations each have extensive histories in informing healthcare transformation activities through applications of data and technology that support clinical decision-making and public health planning efforts. HealthInfoNet, RIQI, and VITL are now entering into a partnership that marks a significant commitment to building a regional interoperable ecosystem designed to improve health and health care experiences across New England. This ecosystem will enhance the positive impact of providing data to enhance patient care, improve the health of populations, and reduce costs for each of the communities the organizations remain committed to serving.

While the partnership formally unifies the organizations in pursuit of a singular vision for the New England region, it is precisely the distinctness of each organization's strengths, experiences, and technologies that makes the alliance unique in comparison to other HIE consortiums in the country.

- **HealthInfoNet** has developed and provided a suite of sophisticated health information services to Maine's healthcare community for more than 15 years. From critical integrations with national (e.g., eHealth Exchange) and statewide (e.g., Prescription Monitoring Program) data repositories, to facilitated exercises on advancing health equity and community information exchange, to the development of expanded quality measurement and predictive risk studies, the organization has established a track record of innovation and reliability over the years. HealthInfoNet serves as a trusted incubator for innovative IT solutions for meeting population health and quality care use cases.



- With over a decade of experience, **RIQI** uses state-of-the-art HIE technology to enable the best healthcare in Rhode Island through connecting and transforming data. With their experience in managing patient consent and patient access to electronic health record systems, RIQI became the first HIE in the nation to develop an independent patient portal. The organization advances the notion of equitable healthcare for all Rhode Island communities by leveraging its rich dataset to help its partners address health disparities by sharing data in ways that are meaningful and useful to all.
- Known for its expertise in extracting meaningful health information from the complex and non-standard clinical documents that constitute a large portion of health records, **VITL's** parsing capabilities continue to advance daily as the organization finalizes its implementation of a new, FHIR-native data repository. The result: more information actively supporting patient care, care coordination, health reform, and Vermont's public health authority.

In partnering together, the organizations aim to accomplish three primary objectives: (1) improved interoperability, (2) expanded innovation and deployment of health information services for their communities, and (3) increased operational efficiencies.

By advancing health information interoperability, the HIEs hope to discover new ways of making patients' critical data available to clinicians regardless of where in the region they receive care. The collaboration aspires to improve the quality, safety, and delivery of patient-centered care through seamless data-sharing, while also informing public health and broader healthcare transformation activities, especially by helping to surface information on patients who have been historically marginalized and/or who live in the most rural parts of the region.

Next, the collaborative will seek to leverage each HIE's existing expertise and infrastructure to bolster the other HIEs' offerings in their home states. This concept of shared services will allow the HIEs to limit the amount of financial and staff investment in redundant technologies and instead focus their energies on identifying new ways to convert and curate their diverse data assets into actionable insights. The agreement will enable the organizations to openly share their expertise with each other, with the aim of building collective capacity for health data sharing, to support better health across the region.

Lastly, the collaboration expects to benefit from increased organizational efficiencies, most notably in the areas of shared staffing and joint purchasing.

Leaders of the three HIE organizations – **Shaun Alfreds** (Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, HealthInfoNet), **Neil Sarkar**, PhD, MLIS, FACMI (President and Chief Executive Officer, RIQI), and **Beth Anderson** (President and Chief Executive Officer, VITL) – developed the vision for this collaboration over the last several months and look forward to developing the partnership in the years to come.

"This collaboration comes at a critical moment in healthcare. Coming out of the pandemic, interoperability efforts have shown enormous value. Our three states have innovated and persevered in support of patients and providers. Bringing our unique teams and skills together now will allow us to not only build upon previous successes, but magnify our impact on both public and private health reforms in our states and region," says Shaun Alfreds. Dr. Sarkar adds: "Rhode Islanders receive the highest quality of care when their healthcare teams have access to their latest clinical data alongside their longitudinal medical history. A regional collaboration with HealthInfoNet and VITL provides the framework to expand where these critical health data can be made available, and provides the opportunity to support regional



population and public health initiatives that benefit New Englanders more broadly.” Beth Anderson shares: “We know that health and health care doesn’t stop at state lines, and patients want their health data to be available at all the places they receive care. VITL’s new collaboration with HealthInfoNet and Rhode Island Quality Institute will help us better serve patients and their clinicians by building more comprehensive records that include the care patients access across New England.”

About HealthInfoNet: HealthInfoNet is an independent nonprofit health information services organization that manages Maine’s statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE). Maine’s statewide HIE is designed to link an individual’s health information across unaffiliated healthcare organizations to create a single, comprehensive electronic health record that allows authorized providers across the state to better support and coordinate patient care and population health. Visit hinfonet.org for more information.

About Rhode Island Quality Institute: The Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) is a nonprofit organization that operates Rhode Island’s Health Information Exchange (HIE) and is the state-designated Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO). RIQI is a health data utility that enables the best health care in Rhode Island by making available trusted health data and information at the time of need. With a wide array of available services, they facilitate improvements in health and health care through initiatives that support care coordination, reduce medical errors and waste, advance quality measurement, as well as engage patients and families in their care. Visit RIQI.org for more information.

About VITL: Vermont Information Technology Leaders, Inc. (VITL) is a nonprofit organization that supports the advancement of health care delivery and reform in Vermont through the aggregation and exchange of health information. Founded in 2005, VITL is the legislatively designated operator of the Vermont Health Information Exchange. VITL’s vision is to be a leader in collaboratively delivering actionable data that leads to better health. Visit vitl.net for more information.