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Special Statewide Issue of The Network News

A new chapter in health information exchange (HIE) began this past April with the launch of the new services and technology of The Network, the statewide health information exchange (HIE) operated by Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC). With the progress and growing interest in The Network, we wanted to share an update on The Network with all AzHeC Update subscribers.

The New Services and Technology of The Network

On April 1, Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC) launched the new services and technology of Arizona's statewide HIE that is now simply called The Network. These new services are designed to provide Arizona physicians with more complete patient information, enabling better care coordination and transitions of care. When AzHeC and Health Information Network of Arizona (HINAZ) combined operations in early 2014, AzHeC looked at changes in the market and what would be required to meet the emerging needs of Arizona providers in the future. It was clear that change was needed quickly. So, in less than year, AzHeC went from a thorough vendor selection and contract negotiation process to the development of a new funding model and a major data migration, culminating in the launch of new and expanded services. This past April the new services and technology platform went live, a remarkable turn-around.

Providing more complete patient information

What drove this rapid turn-around was a focus on meeting the practical information and workflow needs of providers.

- **Practical, actionable information that integrates into the workflow of a practice**
An immediate and tangible benefit of Network participation is the ability to send and receive direct, secure messages among Network participants. Not only does this enable private and secure communication with other participants, this direct messaging function enables another key benefit: the receipt of real-time alerts and notifications. Providers are able to provide a list of patients to The Network, typically high-risk patients, and The Network can send an alert when a patient is admitted, transferred or discharged from a hospital and provide a notification when a patient has an out-of-range clinical or lab result. These real-time alerts and notifications integrate easily into workflow, enabling earlier interventions and, in some cases, even enhancing reimbursement when patients are seen within a short window after a hospital discharge.
- **Services and assistance in meeting Meaningful Use Stage 2**
There are several objectives and measures of Meaningful Use Stage 2 that can be more easily met through the services of The Network. Care summaries can be sent electronically for transitions of care and referrals. In addition, the Network's public health

reporting service allows Network participants to submit state and federally required public health information from their certified electronic health record (EHR). The types of reporting available include immunizations, syndromic surveillance, reportable labs, and reportable diseases. These services all enable and assist with meeting Meaningful Use Stage 2.

- **Bundled services for participating providers**

In the funding model for the new services and technology of The Network, providers receive a bundled set of services for a single participation fee. This includes bidirectional exchange, unlimited provider/payer portal access, unlimited Direct secure email accounts and unlimited alerts and notifications. In addition, this single fee also includes eHealth Exchange connectivity and public health reporting connectivity. There are no separate interface fees or other add-on fees, just one single participation fee.

- **Provider participation and integration costs as low as possible**

In creating the funding model to support The Network, there was agreement among staff and Board members to keep provider participation costs as low as possible. As a result, the new funding model places 95% of the operational funding responsibility on hospitals and health plans, with just 5% of the funding responsibility borne by providers. What this means for providers is an annual provider participation fee of \$250, with volume discounts for groups of providers.

A Summary of Key Services

The key services of the new Network technology platform include:

- Bidirectional exchange
- Alerts and notifications
- Provider and payer portals
- Direct secure email
- Public health reporting
- Connection to eHealth Exchange (national network)

More information on these new services is available [here](#).

The potential of the new Network platform and services is difficult to overstate. While Arizona enjoys robust and growing HIE that is connecting providers, hospitals, health care systems and payers across the state, The Network is **the community asset** and **network of networks** that enables better care coordination, improved transitions of care and more informed care decisions. If you would like more information on the new Network services and technology platform or if you would like to discuss joining The Network, please contact a Network representative at (602) 688-7200 or thenetwork@azhec.org.