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***gmc*f gives \$25,000 in support of Georgia Health Information Exchange's (GHIE) e-health efforts**

ATLANTA (June 19, 2006) – With a swipe of a card or a few clicks of a mouse, you can access all of your banking history and manage a multitude of different functions. Could the same become true for your health records? A donation from *gmc*f (Georgia Medical Care Foundation) brings the Georgia Health Information Exchange (GHIE) one step closer toward its goal of creating a more efficient, integrated health system for Georgia.

GHIE, which officially incorporated this year, has focused its efforts on improving the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care through the implementation of health information technology.

The \$25,000 seed money from *gmc*f will help support GHIE activities, including the funding of several demonstration projects designed to promote the benefits of the use of electronic health records.

“A new health-care system is needed that emphasizes efficiency, patient safety, lowers costs and saves lives,” said *gmc*f CEO Dennis White. “The creation of a connected, accessible electronic health care system offers great promise in addressing these issues.”

Today's health care industry remains a bastion of paper-based recordkeeping, billing and information exchange, which is not only inefficient but challenges providers' ability to deliver the highest quality of care.

GHIE aims to help facilitate uniform standards that will enable clinical staff, providers, health plans, pharmacies, laboratories, public health agencies, and other health-care stakeholders to communicate with each other and securely share information through a connected network, or a regional health information exchange. Such networks will make it much easier for health-care professionals to coordinate a patient's care with other providers, share needed information, and monitor a patient's care.

Experts estimate that the development of fully integrated or interoperable information technology systems could reduce the nation's nearly \$2 trillion total health-care expenditures by as much as 28 percent.

But changes won't be easy or overnight, said GHIE supporter Fred Watson. Watson, who serves as president of the Georgia Health Care Association, an organization representing Georgia's nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities, said it would take the support and involvement of all Georgians.

“Interoperability is a journey, not a destination,” said Watson. “Everything we do, large or small, will have an impact, and bring us closer to the day when we can all benefit from electronic medical records, e-prescriptions and all the other applications health IT has to offer. With the health-care

community, politicians, business leaders, and consumers all working together on this, we can make a significant difference in the health and quality of life of all Georgians.”

About GHIE

The Georgia Health Information Exchange is a not-for-profit organization of Georgia’s key health care stakeholders established to facilitate the development of regional health information exchange.

About *gmc*

gmc is a not-for-profit, physician-sponsored organization dedicated to continuously improving health care. In operation since 1970, *gmc* provides innovative health-care solutions focused on quality improvement, utilization management, medical review, and health-care outcomes research. For more than 20 years, *gmc* has served as the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for Georgia through a contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. For more information, please visit www.gmc.org.

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