

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**The Health Advancement Collaborative of Central New York's
Regional Health Information Organization, *HealthConnections*,
Awarded \$900,000 in Federal Funds
for the Electronic Exchange of Health Information**

Congressman Daniel Maffei today announced the award of nearly \$900,000 in federal funds to launch *HealthConnections*, Central New York's Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO). *HealthConnections* is building a secure electronic health information exchange that will allow physicians, hospitals, and diagnostic centers to exchange patient information electronically across Central New York. The award is on top of \$2.1 million in New York State funds awarded in 2008 and \$350,000 in local corporate contributions from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, MVP Health Care and National Grid.

"Today we celebrate the launch of a major initiative that will transform how medical care is delivered in Central New York," Maffei stated. "With *HealthConnections*, providers will have the tools they need to provide even better and more affordable care on behalf of patients, employers and the larger Central New York community." *HealthConnections* is an undertaking of the Health Advancement Collaborative of Central New York (HAC-CNY).

By using information technology to streamline patient care, *HealthConnections* will help improve the quality and safety of health care for patients and create a more cost effective delivery system. *HealthConnections* will protect the privacy of patients while providing their health care clinicians with an efficient means of obtaining critical medical information in 'real time' and at the point of care. The result will be improved coordination of patient care, fewer unnecessary medical tests and procedures, fewer adverse drug interactions, and reduced paper work for providers and patients alike. All while helping to control health care costs.

"Sharing of health information amongst community healthcare providers is essential for quality patient care." said Dr. David Duggan, Quality Officer for University Hospital and SUNY Upstate Medical University Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean, Clinical Initiatives. "This is good news for patients and their providers."

"There is no question that we will be able to provide better patient care more efficiently by integrated use of electronic records instead of paper records," stated Tom Quinn, President and CEO of Community General Hospital and Vice

Chair of the New York eHealth Collaborative, the coordinating body for RHIOs statewide.

“This is an important undertaking for patients and for business given the potential to improve care while reducing costs,” stated Orrin MacMurray, HAC-CNY’s President and Chairman of C&S Companies. A feasibility study conducted by HAC-CNY estimated savings to the community of at least \$19 million a year.

“Thanks to modern technology and strong federal and state standards, patients can be assured that their health information will protected” said Rob Hack, *HealthConnections’ Director*. “Health Information Exchange technology is the enabler to seamlessly connect decentralized patient information into a single view for healthcare providers – while maintaining the security and privacy expected.”

Initially, *HealthConnections* will connect four hospitals, five large medical practices, and the region’s largest lab in Onondaga County. Beginning in 2011, additional hospitals, physicians and labs will be connected from throughout the region. *HealthConnections* is one of the first RHIOs in the State to build the ability for providers to share health information across regions and, eventually, statewide.

HealthConnections is one of 13 Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIO) in New York State that are building technology to allow patient health information to be shared electronically across providers locally and statewide. *HealthConnections’* initial participants are: Community General Hospital, Crouse Hospital, SUNY Upstate Medical University Hospital, Saint Joseph’s Hospital Health Center, CNY Family Care, Family Care Medical Group, Internist Associates of CNY, SUNY University Hospital General Primary Care and Specialty Clinics, St. Joseph Hospital Primary Care Centers & St. Joseph Physician Health PC, and Laboratory Alliance of CNY.

Health Advancement Collaborative of Central New York (HAC-CNY) is a regional collaborative of leaders in health care, business and insurance formed in 2005 to address shared concerns about health care access, quality and costs in Central New York. A not-for-profit organization, the Collaborative’s founding members include the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Hospital Executive Council, the Manufacturers Association of Central New York, the Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, the Onondaga Medical Society, and Excellus BlueCross BlueShield. Others represented on the board are C&S Engineers, MVP Health Care, Kinney Drugs, Syracuse University, Welch Allyn, and Stickley Audi.

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