



“A Body of Information” 2009 - 2010 Report to the Community

About HEALTHeLINK and Message from Chair

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HEALTHeLINK, the Western New York Clinical Information Exchange, is a collaborative effort among various health care organizations to share clinical information in efficient and meaningful ways to improve the delivery of care, enhance outcomes, and help control health care costs throughout the region. Through HEALTHeLINK, physicians and other health care providers can securely access their patients' lab results, tests, radiology reports, transcribed reports, medication information and a wide range of other health information. In addition to administering the information exchange, HEALTHeLINK also provides assistance to participating physician practices in selecting an electronic medical records vendor, planning related to the implementation of the program, and assistance with clinical transformation with a focus on integrating technology into the process and workflow of the office.

What has made HEALTHeLINK successful thus far, and what will continue to make it successful in the future, is the unprecedented collaboration among our region's hospital systems, health plans, physicians and other providers. While competition is an inherent part of the marketplace, we are a team when it comes to the advancement of health care for patients in our community.



The commitment of resources, both human and financial, demonstrates our commitment to quality health care in Western New York. A decade ago, we showed that collaboration works with the launch of the administrative network HealthNet. Building upon this same vision, we explored the possibility of sharing clinical information among providers, and thus created HEALTHeLINK.

As health care practitioners, we realize that timely access to patient health information will lead to better, more effective, and more efficient care, as well as an improved patient experience. HEALTHeLINK is helping physicians and other health care providers to accomplish these important goals. The clinical information exchange will also enable physician practices and hospitals throughout our community to share information safely, securely, and in a timely manner.

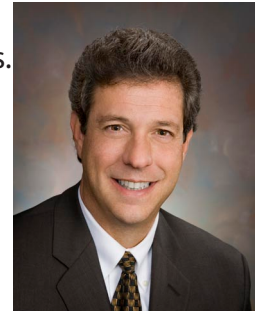
HEALTHeLINK represents an initiative of which all of Western New York can be extremely proud. It is a credit to our employees and to our health care partners. Best of all, we have only begun to tap into technology's potential to transform and improve our health care system. By working together, we can continue to use technology to improve the health of people throughout our community.

*Michael W. Cropp, MD
Chair, HEALTHeLINK Board of Directors
President & CEO, Independent Health*

Message from HEALTHeLINK's Executive Director

Serving as Executive Director of HEALTHeLINK since 2007, Daniel E. Porreca has provided the leadership necessary for HEALTHeLINK to become one of the leading clinical information exchange networks in the United States. He is also Chair of the Policy and Operations Council supporting the New York State Department of Health and the New York eHealth Collaborative public-private partnership and collaboration process.

On behalf of HEALTHeLINK, I am pleased to report to the community that Western New York has one of the leading regional health information organizations in the United States. As our Board Chairman Dr. Michael Cropp has stated, this is due to the unprecedented level of collaboration among the region's hospital systems and health plans over the past 10 years. The collaboration, however, does not stop here. In working with health care professionals throughout the region, especially in the physician community, we are on the cutting edge of fulfilling the promise of technology to enhance health care for our population.



We also have a great partner in this endeavor with New York State, and specifically the New York State Department of Health and the Office of Health Information Technology Transformation. HEALTHeLINK has been fortunate to have been awarded approximately \$13.8 million in funding in 2010 from the Department of Health through the HEAL program. This is the direct result of the collaborative efforts of our community in creating a highly functioning clinical information exchange. Another milestone occurred in May 2010 when HEALTHeLINK received the Beacon Community Award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). At the time, the \$16.1 million award was the largest in the United States, and one of only a handful among the hundreds of applications that were submitted for consideration. The Beacon Project was created to build on the health information technology foundation already established and to accelerate our efforts in implementing the tools and technologies to improve care for individuals in our community, with a special focus on those with diabetes. We were honored that our application received the enthusiastic support of United States Senator Charles Schumer and United States Representative Brian Higgins.

There are so many other individuals and organizations to recognize and thank for HEALTHeLINK's success to date, but space will simply not allow me to make these acknowledgements. I do want to recognize and applaud the hard work of the HEALTHeLINK staff. Their commitment and dedication has resulted in bringing our region to the forefront in health information technology, and that is to be commended.

Despite all of these accomplishments, we are still on the frontier of fulfilling what the promise of technology can do in transforming our health system. From monitoring, tracking and sharing information as it pertains to public and population health, to reducing (with the aim of eliminating) medical errors, we have only just begun this great journey.

At the end of the day, HEALTHeLINK is about one thing – better and more efficient use of technology so that doctors can make better decisions for their patients. This is the fulfillment of the promise of technology that we will continue to strive for now and in the future.

*Daniel E. Porreca
Executive Director, HEALTHeLINK*

A Beacon Community



HEALTHeLINK was awarded a \$16.1 million Beacon Community Award, one of only 17 in the country, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in May 2010. Through the Beacon Community Initiative, HEALTHeLINK and 40 community partners are working to improve clinical outcomes and patient safety through the use of health information technology and health information exchange, focused on improving overall diabetes care management across all levels of care. The Western New York Beacon Community encompasses eight counties, more than 500 physicians, three federally qualified health centers, four rural health networks, nine government agencies, 29 hospitals and a major research university, serving 50,000 individuals with diabetes.

As required by the Beacon Award, HEALTHeLINK must fulfill various outcomes through 2013, including demonstrating cost savings as measured by a 5% reduction in visits to the emergency room, a 5% reduction in hospitalizations for ambulatory care, and a 5% reduction in 30-day readmission rates for diabetic patients. Another measured outcome is to increase pneumococcal vaccinations and annual seasonal influenza vaccination rates by 10% using electronic health record alerts and prompts for individuals with diabetes. HEALTHeLINK has joined with the University at Buffalo and Cornell University to measure the success of the Beacon outcomes.



Dr. David Blumenthal, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology visits the HEALTHeLINK Learning Lab with Daniel Porreca, Congressman Brian Higgins, and Dr. Richard Daines, NYS Health Commissioner.

HEALTHeLINK Participants

The following data providers are currently submitting records to HEALTHeLINK. Submission began on the dates indicated.

	ADTs	Radiology	Labs	Transcribed Reports
Catholic Health System	July 2008	July 2008	August 2008	TBD
Erie County Medical Center	November 2007	December 2009	March 2010	December 2010
Kaleida Health System	June 2008	August 2008	August 2008	August 2008
Mount St. Mary's Hospital	December 2009	February 2010	October 2010	February 2010
Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center	October 2009	October 2009	TBD	TBD
Quest Diagnostics	N/A	N/A	October 2008	N/A
Roswell Park Cancer Institute	September 2009	September 2009	September 2009	September 2009
United Memorial Medical Center	March 2010	August 2010	TBD	TBD
Upper Allegheny Health System	August 2010	December 2010	November 2010	December 2010
WCA Hospital	November 2009	November 2009	November 2009	November 2009
Windsong Radiology Group	July 2010	August 2010	N/A	N/A

At 2010 year end, there are more than 38 million total results available through HEALTHeLINK and 1.7 million records are added every month. Approximately 160 physician practices and 900 physicians are participating in the clinical information exchange. A list of participating physicians is continually updated at www.wnyhealthelink.com.

HEALTHeLINK Learning Lab

For physician practices interested in purchasing an EMR system, the HEALTHeLINK Learning Lab is a resource to assist in the evaluation and selection process, and to learn how an EMR will interface with HEALTHeLINK to seamlessly and securely exchange clinical information between treating physician practices. Throughout the year, HEALTHeLINK holds open house events where multiple vendors exhibit their products. In addition, a practice can work with any of the select EMR vendors to schedule time in the Learning Lab to review their product.



How HEALTHeLINK is Improving Care

Several local physicians highlight examples of how HEALTHeLINK is working to improve the quality of patient care and reduce health care costs.

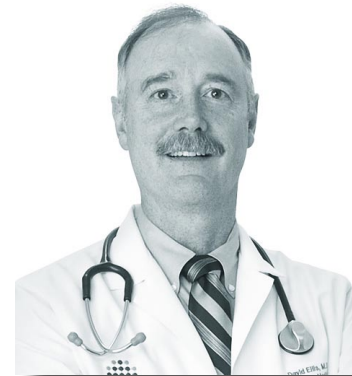


"I saw a patient who had a test done by a specialist several weeks prior to her visit with me. She hadn't heard back from the specialist so she assumed the results were normal. While in the room with her, I accessed HEALTHeLINK to view the results, and found that the test was abnormal and required follow-up testing. I contacted the specialist who reviewed the results and arranged for the appropriate follow-up evaluation."

Bonnie Sunday, MD, Solo Practitioner

"A patient had been seen at a different hospital three days earlier, and was told she had abnormal test results and needed to follow up. We were able to access the labs within seconds through HEALTHeLINK rather than the usual procedure of calling the other hospital asking to fax the test results, obtaining a consent form, and then faxing over the results. As a result of HEALTHeLINK, we could immediately and directly compare with follow-up labs completed in the emergency department."

**David Ellis, MD, Director of Emergency Medicine,
Erie County Medical Center**



"By accessing HEALTHeLINK, I'm able to get regular updates on my patients' emergency room and hospital admissions at the local hospitals. The dictated reports and laboratory and radiology information from the physicians treating my office patients are almost immediately available to me. I have all of the information for my patients' next office visit, and am able to continue the care begun in the hospital or emergency room."

**Raghu Ram, MD, Primary Care Physician
Senior Medical Director,
BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York**

Funding HEALTHeLINK

HEALTHeLINK, a not-for-profit organization, was established through funding from BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, Catholic Health System, Erie County Medical Center Corporation, Independent Health Association, Kaleida Health, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Univera Healthcare, and the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers Capital Grant Program (HEAL NY) from New York State.

Our current project portfolio includes:

HEAL NY Phase 5 -- \$5.2 million

Advancing New York's health information organizational, clinical and technical infrastructure

HEALTHeLINK was awarded this grant in March 2008 to support and improve comprehensive care management and coordination of care through the interoperable sharing of clinical data between practitioners and EMR systems. Many physician practices are faced with the challenge of selecting an EMR system that will allow them to take advantage of the incentives being offered and to meet the meaningful use requirements. HEALTHeLINK built a state-of-the-art Learning Lab Center showcasing different vendors' EMR systems. This allows the practices to view and compare the functionality of several different vendors at one time to support making a decision for an EMR system that will meet their business, as well as, clinical requirements.

Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) -- \$1 million

Assisting Buffalo Area Physicians Health Information Exchange

MSSNY awarded Buffalo Area Physicians Health Information Exchange (BAPHIE) \$1 million to implement a clinical information exchange among member EMRs triggered by the referral process. BAPHIE engaged HEALTHeLINK to deliver the solution and provide greater continuity of care between primary care and specialists. A data repository will be created in the near future for patient and public health use.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Beacon Award -- \$16.1 million

Western New York named a Beacon Community

One of only 17 awardees in the country, HEALTHeLINK is using this grant to fight the high incidences of diabetes in the Western New York community through health information technology.

Additional information can be found on page 4 of this report.

About HEAL NY

New York State passed the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers Capital Grant Program (referred to as HEAL NY) in 2004 under the New York State Department of Health. One of the program's primary objectives is implementing a 21st century health information infrastructure to support the delivery of high-quality care. To date, the Department of Health has awarded four competitive grant rounds for health IT, of which HEALTHeLINK was a recipient.

HEAL NY Phase 10 -- \$6.9 million

Improving patient care coordination and management through patient-centered medical home

New York State awarded HEALTHeLINK this grant in September 2009 to focus on the 50,000 individuals in Western New York with diabetes by building on current health information technology. Using improved clinical processes and medical record technology networking to HEALTHeLINK, primary care practices are able to pull labs, radiology and hospital results. The practice can then integrate these results with electronic patient data generated from the practice to provide well-informed diagnoses and care coordination for patients. Additionally, the practice will have a clearer line to those patients who are in greatest need of care but who may not actively seek care.

HEAL NY Phase 17 -- \$3.8 million

Mental health and care coordination

In July 2010, HEALTHeLINK was awarded a \$3.8 million grant to improve the delivery and coordination of mental health and primary care through information technology for approximately 20,000 Western New York patients with complex mental health problems. Currently there is little communication between behavioral health and primary care providers. In Western New York, outpatient mental health service providers are over capacity, leading to hospitalization rates for mental illnesses higher than the state average. The goal of this grant is to connect 70 primary care providers with 59 mental health providers to support care coordination, which has been found to significantly reduce depression impairment and also improve cost-effectiveness compared with typical care.



NYS Department of Health supplemental award -- \$10 million

Child health immunization, newborn screening and chronic disease

Attending the announcement of this award were (L-R) Congressman Brian Higgins; Rachel Block, Deputy Commissioner, New York State Department of Health's Office of IT Transformation; James Kaskie, President & CEO, Kaleida Health; Dr. Anthony Billittier, Erie County Health Commissioner; Dr. Donald Trump, President & CEO, Roswell Park and Daniel Porreca, HEALTHeLINK.

Awarded in October 2010, HEALTHeLINK is leading the development and implementation of a clinical data exchange to public health, focused on child health immunization and newborn screening, syndromic surveillance and chronic disease with an emphasis on cancer, which can be reproduced by other regional health information organizations across the state.

2009 in Review

While in the planning and pilot testing stages since 2006, HEALTHeLINK officially launched the clinical information exchange to the Western New York health community on **January 21, 2009** with the seven stakeholder CEOs and Lori Evans, Deputy Commissioner, Health Information and Technology at the New York State Department of Health in attendance.

Later that month, HEALTHeLINK signs an agreement with UBMD Physicians Group, a practice plan of 450 physicians who are also professors at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, to join the exchange.



HEALTHeLINK hosted a panel discussion with the Buffalo Niagara Partnership in **February 2009**, featuring leading business and health care executives discussing the impact of health care costs on businesses and solutions to mitigate these costs.

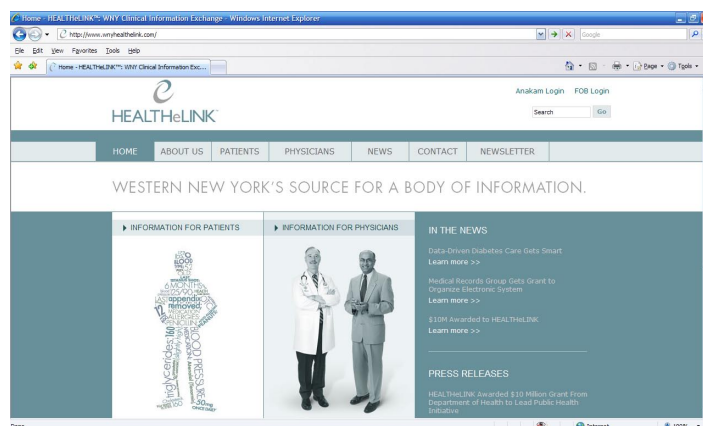
In **June 2009**, HEALTHeLINK and the Erie County Medical Center partnered to obtain consents to have their health information accessible through the clinical information exchange from patients visiting the emergency room. Today, the program averages 100 patient consent forms signed daily.

HEALTHeLINK was cited as one of the leading health information exchanges in the country according to results from the eHealth Initiative and the Foundation of eHealth Initiative annual survey in **July 2009**.

To better educate both physicians and consumers, HEALTHeLINK launched a new website in **September 2009**, which includes resources about the electronic medical records program and the patient consent process.

HEALTHeLINK opened its Learning Lab in **December 2009**, holding an open house attended by 15 physician practices that met with potential EMR vendor partners.

Approximately 50,000 Western New Yorkers have consented to join the exchange within one year of its official launch.



In **January 2010**, HEALTHeLINK launched a public education campaign to create greater awareness in the community about the benefits of allowing physicians to access patients' health information electronically.



In **February 2010**, Jamestown's WCA Hospital became the first hospital serving a rural community to participate in HEALTHeLINK.

In its ongoing effort to protect the privacy and security of patients' health information, in **March 2010**, HEALTHeLINK partnered with Anakam, a San Diego, CA-based technology company, to augment its already secure and reliable infrastructure.

In **April 2010**, Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in Niagara County joined HEALTHeLINK, allowing them to electronically share and access patient health information.

In **early May**, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services awarded HEALTHeLINK with \$16.1 million in funding as part of the Beacon Community Program.

HEALTHeLINK joined with Aspire of Western New York in **May 2010** to announce a \$50,000 grant to help the organization purchase an electronic health record system. Over 2,000 individuals with developmental disabilities are treated at Aspire's health clinic and have their health information available in electronic format, which will enhance their care.

The CEOs of the region's hospital systems and health plans and the founding organizations of HEALTHeLINK joined together in **June 2010** to sign their respective consent forms to launch an industry-wide drive. Also in **June**, Limestone Primary Care Physicians in Williamsville became the first physician practice to receive funding for the purchase and implementation of an EMR system through a new program administered by HEALTHeLINK and funded by BlueCross BlueShield, Independent Health and Univera.

Windsong Radiology became the first independent radiology practice to begin submitting patient records and reports through HEALTHeLINK in **August 2010**.

In **October**, the New York State Department of Health awarded HEALTHeLINK with a \$10 million supplemental grant to lead the development and implementation of a clinical data exchange to public health, focused on child health immunization and newborn screening, syndromic surveillance and chronic disease with an emphasis on cancer, that can be reproduced by other regional health information organizations.

Approaching the two-year anniversary of its official launch, approximately 170,000 Western New Yorkers have signed HEALTHeLINK consent forms by **December 2010**.



HEALTHeLINK™

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