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Governor Announces Health IT Efforts to Help Reduce Health Care Costs, Improve Quality of Care

Columbus – Ohio Governor Ted Strickland today announced health information technology efforts aimed at reducing health care costs and improving the quality of health care in Ohio.

Strickland designated the non-profit Ohio Health Information Partnership (OHIP), a unique public-private collaboration, as the entity to lead the implementation and support of health information technology throughout Ohio.

The state's 2010-11 biennial budget allocates \$8 million in non-GRF funds to the Ohio Department of Insurance to support efforts in health information technology. The Department of Insurance will work together with OHIP to oversee the use of this money and the application for federal resources.

“Advancing health IT efforts can help save resources and improve the quality of health care for Ohioans by providing better and timelier access to comprehensive health information,” Strickland said.

The Ohio Health Information Partnership will support the adoption and use of electronic medical records by Ohio's health care providers. The partnership is charged with implementing and overseeing a statewide health information exchange that will improve access to data and patient information by authorized health care providers while ensuring patient privacy. The partnership also will collaborate with industry experts to provide educational, technical, and procurement services to health care providers who need to implement electronic medical records.

“Health care experts and stakeholders have consistently identified the utilization of health information technology as a critical component to lowering cost and improving quality,” said Ohio Department of Insurance Director Mary Jo Hudson. “By utilizing a self-

sustaining, non-profit entity with broad based representation, Ohio will be able to establish a successful statewide health information exchange and encourage adoption of electronic medical records.”

Vice President Joe Biden announced more than \$1.2 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants for health IT efforts on August 20. This unique partnership will help demonstrate the state’s commitment to health IT advancements when applying for ARRA funds and then manage receipt of such funds.

A public forum will be held from 10 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. Friday, September 25, at the Riffe Studio One Theatre, 77 S. High Street, 4th floor. The public forum is open to all interested parties to discuss the state’s health IT vision and to solicit feedback. Additional information on OHIP, as well as details about this public forum and future events, is available at <http://www.healthcarereform.ohio.gov/healthit.aspx>.

The Ohio Health Information Partnership is currently a subsidiary of BioOhio and has its own independent board. BioOhio is a non-profit that has worked for more than 20 years to build and accelerate bioscience research, industry and education in Ohio.

The initial board includes representation from BioOhio, the Ohio Hospital Association, the Ohio State Medical Association, the Ohio Osteopathic Association, and state government. The partnership will expand its board to include representation from health care payers, the business community, the university system, behavioral health providers, community health centers, and consumers.

More information is available at <http://www.healthcarereform.ohio.gov/healthit.aspx>.