

Q & A

Maine Health Information Network Technology (MHINT)

“NEWCO”

Board of Directors

Background, Roles and Responsibilities

Plans are under way to establish a new statewide non-profit organization to govern the emerging Maine Health Information Network Technology (MHINT) system. An initial meeting of the board of directors is expected to take place by early February, 2006.

Q. What is the MHINT?

A. Maine is poised to become one of the first states in the nation to develop a statewide integrated electronic clinical health information-sharing network. The system now being developed through the MHINT project will allow a physician or other provider to use a computer or hand-held electronic device to immediately access (with patient consent) the most current medical information in Maine about a patient regardless of where the care was rendered.. Information will be drawn from a number of sources, such as the patient’s electronic medical record (EMR), recent laboratory tests, prescriptions, etc. and arrayed on the caregiver’s screen as he or she is treating the patient. Future plans will allow patients to conveniently access their own records to confirm that important information, such as an allergy to medication, is correctly recorded and to enhance the record with their own health information. The MHINT system is being designed to improve the quality of health care, enhance patient safety, moderate the growth of costs and make healthcare information available to consumers and caregivers. More information about the MHINT project, including a feasibility study completed in late 2004, can be found at www.mhint.org.

Q. What is the current status of the MHINT project?

A. In the spring of 2005, MHINT began an aggressive 12-month Planning and Development process (called Phase II) to lay the necessary foundation for the beginning of statewide system implementation in 2007. Much of Phase II work has been conducted with the help of three key stakeholder groups that involve a wide range of leaders from across Maine: Technology Committee, Governance Stakeholder Group, Consumer Stakeholder Group.

Technology: 16 national vendors responded to a detailed request for information (RFI) that was developed and provided to the national health care IT vendor community in mid-2005. Following an extensive review process, five vendors were selected to come to Maine in November, 2005 for presentations and in-depth interviews with the MHINT Technology Committee, Maine Health Information Center staff, and consultants working on the MHINT project. Three of these vendors (3M, Accenture and HealthVision) have

been invited to work with the MHINT team to discuss in more detail information about their products, references, and contracting approaches that will meet Maine's need for a vendor partner to implement an inter-connected electronic clinical system in Maine. A draft functional design document that outlines the scope of the MHINT system has been completed. Further work with the MHINT vendor will provide the description of how the system will achieve the functions outlined in the document, including how disparate clinical systems across the state will be connected using a "Master Patient Index" for Maine patients.

Governance: Plans call for transitioning the MHINT from its current project oversight process to a permanent governance structure in early 2006. By late November, 2005 the Governance Stakeholder Group had completed a set of recommendations calling for MHINT governance by a newly created statewide non-profit organization. The Governance Stakeholder Group then conducted an extensive nominating process that resulted in the selection of 19 individuals from across the state to serve on the MHINT NEWCO Board. An initial meeting of a new MHINT board of directors will take place by early February 2006.

Consumer Involvement/Privacy and Security: Consumer involvement is a critical element of the MHINT project because an overall goal of the MHINT system is to allow patients more access to their own medical information. Through its Consumer Stakeholder Group, the MHINT project gained an improved understanding of the privacy and security concerns many consumers have as Maine moves from a paper-based medical information system to one that is more reliant on electronic clinical information. The Consumer Stakeholder Group developed a Consumer Vision for the MHINT system as well as a set of principles and recommendations that will be presented to the NEWCO Board in early 2006.

Project Oversight and Management: The MHINT project has been guided by four organizations that have provided much of the funding for the process that has been under way since August, 2004. The MHINT Steering Committee is made up of the Maine Health Access Foundation, the Maine Quality Forum, the Maine Center for Disease Control (formerly known as the Maine Bureau of Health), and the Maine Health Information Center (MHIC). The MHIC, which is an independent statewide health data research organization, serves as project manager. Additional funding for MHINT has been provided by Maine-based health delivery systems, a large payer, private foundations, and the federal government.

Q. What is the purpose of the new non-profit organization now being formed?

A. MHINT NEWCO will operate as a charitable, non-profit organization responsible for overseeing the implementation and operation of a statewide health information technology network. The mission of MHINT NEWCO will be to establish, govern and sustain this new electronic clinical information-sharing system. The primary purpose of MHINT NEWCO will be to provide caregivers with patient-specific information (with the patient's consent) from a number of data sources at the point of care. The system also will support Maine's public health information data reporting, including data support for

public health emergency preparedness efforts. The use and disclosure of MHINT data will comply with HIPAA standards and all statutes and regulations governing the use of such data.

The new organization will manage all aspects of the governance of the system. This will include its funding and financial management, hiring and management of an Executive Director, compliance with privacy and security requirements, approval of an annual budget and work plan, promotion of the MHINT statewide and nationally and other responsibilities identified by the Board of Directors.

***Q.* What will be the role of the MHINT NEWCO Board of Directors?**

A. The MHINT NEWCO Board of Directors will consist of 19 individuals drawn from geographically diverse regions of the state. The board will represent major stakeholder interests including hospitals, physicians, consumers, government, public health, employers, health insurance plans/payers and others. The Board of Directors will have the responsibility for the oversight and control of the property and affairs of MHINT NEWCO. The Board will:

- oversee the mission of the organization;
- actively participate in the development of the organizational funding base;
- approve operational, technology, marketing, business and financial sustainability plans;
- ensure that the organization has competent management and effective leadership;
- appraise the performance of the organization;
- exercise fiduciary responsibility;
- advocate for and disseminate information regarding the work of MHINT NEWCO
- assure compliance with privacy and security requirements;
- make certain that MHINT data is used and disclosed only for those reasons specified in the organization's mission statement and organization's bylaws; and
- ensure that MHINT NEWCO is well positioned to become the Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) for Maine.

Meetings of the Board will be open to the public except for executive sessions when proprietary and personnel issues must be addressed. It is expected that the Board will meet monthly during its first year (2006) of operation.

***Q.* Who will serve on the MHINT NEWCO Board of Directors?**

A. Nearly 100 individuals were nominated to serve on the MHINT NEWCO Board. Following an extensive review process, nineteen individuals from across Maine were named to the MHINT NEWCO Board. These individuals were selected because the MHINT Governance Stakeholder Group determined that they could:

- Assure a high level of commitment and buy-in for the MHINT from their peers

- Provide leadership and opportunities in working with major stakeholders and potential funding sources, e.g. the Governor, Congressional Delegation, major delivery systems, federal and state government funding, etc.
- Provide experience and expertise needed to approve the MHINT system's business, technology, and other plans
- Provide and/or raise funding to sustain the MHINT
- Participate in discussions regarding the MHINT technology system based on experience and expertise
- Represent the interests of potential MHINT users or data sources
- Represent a consumer as an individual or association
- Attend organizational and regularly-scheduled Board meetings
- Participate in initiatives aimed at building awareness, understanding and support for the MHINT system.

Q. What are the key decisions the new Board will need to make at its initial meetings?

A. Because much of the administrative work has been completed or is now under way, the new Board will be able to quickly focus on major decisions that need to be made early in 2006. These decisions include naming an executive director, agreeing on a name for the organization, approving a business plan and selecting the technical vendor to implement the system. A great deal of progress has been made in each of these areas so that the Board will have the information it needs to make these key decisions as soon as possible.

For more information about the MHINT project, visit www.mhint.org or contact Suanne Singer at the Maine Health Information Center at ssinger@mhic.org.