

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:**

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**MICHIGAN UPPER PENINSULA HEALTH CARE NETWORK TO BUILD  
ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD SYSTEM  
WITH NEW \$1.5 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT**

**L'ANSE, MICH.** – The Michigan Upper Peninsula Health Care Network has been awarded an estimated \$1.5 million grant from the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to create a web-based electronic medical record (EMR) system for 10 small rural hospitals including Schoolcraft Memorial that will connect them to the area's regional medical center, Marquette General and help improve patient safety and quality of care. First-year funding for the three-year project is \$498,506.

The Network is one of 16 grantees selected by AHRQ to complete projects considered key to the nation's 10-year strategy to bring health care into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by advancing the use of information technology (IT).

Joy Strand, Chief Operating Officer at Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital noted that many patients in the rural Upper Peninsula who need specialized care are transferred to Marquette General Hospital. "In an emergency situation, it's critical that the attending physician have access to the patient's medical history," Strand said. "By linking rural hospitals with Marquette, we can give all providers the information they need to care for their patients, and eliminate duplicate tests and exams when a patient is transferred. Likewise, when a patient returns for follow-up care we can link-up to Marquette and access the patients' information, which ultimately improves patient safety and reduces costs. AHRQ's grant will allow us to achieve this and to build upon what we have already implemented this year." said Strand referring to the ambitious new IT system that SMH launched earlier this year.

**The project will develop health IT systems at each participating hospital to capture patient data. A secure web-based portal will allow authorized providers to access clinical information and laboratory reports, and eliminate handwritten medical records. Physicians will also be able to prescribe medicine electronically, using systems that will flag potential adverse reactions with other prescriptions or documented drug allergies. The systems will also collect data on health care outcomes.**

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“This project is part of a national movement to make our health care system better and safer through smart use of information technology,” said AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D. “It is very exciting to see this project move from concept and planning to implementation and real-world impact.”

AHRQ launched its health IT initiative to advance the goals of President Bush for modernizing health care through the best and most effective use of IT. With the 16 new grant awards, AHRQ has invested \$166 million in grants and contracts in 41 states to support and stimulate investment in health IT, especially in rural and underserved areas. Together, these projects form a nationwide learning laboratory of health care systems, hospitals, physician practices, research institutes, nursing homes, and other organizations that are helping to transform everyday clinical practice through health IT.

To support its health IT initiative, AHRQ established the National Resource Center for Health Information Technology, which provides technical assistance to all of AHRQ’s health IT grantees and serves as the link between the health care community at large and the researchers and experts who are on the front lines of health IT. The National Resource Center will also disseminate new tools, best practices, and research results produced by this unique real-world laboratory for examining health IT at work.

For more information on AHRQ’s health IT initiative, visit <http://healthit.arhq.gov>.