

News Release

For immediate release

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***Connections* community of practice funded by HRSA**

ATLANTA, June 1, 2006 — The *Connections* community of practice has been awarded funding to continue its work through 2010, the Public Health Informatics Institute (the Institute) has announced. *Connections* was launched in June 2004 to encourage peer-to-peer interaction among public health practitioners exploring issues of child health information systems integration.

In this collaborative and networking environment, *Connections* members shorten the learning curve by sharing their promising practices and detailing their successes and challenges. For example, members have collaboratively addressed complex issues such as data quality. And *Connections* will create a users group to further the development of a business case model for integration of health information systems.

As the organizer and facilitator of the community of practice, the Institute will coordinate its efforts with those in other sectors, including the Regional Genetics and Newborn Screening Collaboratives funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA/MCHB). The *Connections* community of practice will continue to bring members together for learning and networking opportunities. *Connections* workgroups will foster the development of useful, usable products such as *The Unique Records Portfolio*, which guides health practitioners with strategies for records "deduplication," and an evaluation toolkit. For more information, visit www.phii.org.

Connections assists state and local public health agencies that are integrating information systems essential to improving the health of children, specifically those with congenital or genetic conditions identified through newborn screening. By participating in this dynamic collaboration, members of the community of practice receive facilitated peer-to-peer support to help them move their systems integration projects forward more effectively.

Connections is supported through a cooperative agreement with HRSA and facilitated by the Institute. *Connections* builds on HRSA/MCHB's commitment to expanding and strengthening newborn screening information systems and promoting their linkage to other public child health information systems and medical homes.

About Public Health Informatics Institute

The Public Health Informatics Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing public health practitioners' ability to strategically apply and manage information systems. The Institute's goal is to foster effective health information systems through collaboration, innovation, and action.

About the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau

The mission of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) is to provide national leadership, in partnership with key stakeholders, to improve the physical and mental health, safety and well-being of the maternal and child health (MCH) population, which includes all of the nation's women, infants, children, adolescents, and their families, including fathers and children with special health care needs.

Contact information

Connections Web page: www.phii.org/ConnectionsCOP.html

For more information about Connections, contact Jim Mootrey, Public Health Informatics Institute, at (404) 592-1416, or e-mail [jmootrey @phii.org](mailto:jmootrey@phii.org).

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For more information about the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, contact Marie Mann, Deputy Chief, Genetic Services Branch, at (301) 443-1080, or e-mail mmann@hrsa.gov.

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