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## **Georgia to Receive \$3.9 Million in Federal Funds for New Health Transparency Web site**

**ATLANTA** – Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) Commissioner Dr. Rhonda Medows announced today that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded DCH with a two-year federal award totaling \$3,929,855 to assist with the implementation of Georgia's Health Information Transparency Web site. In response to the CMS Medicaid Transformation Grant solicitation, the department requested the federal funds in June 2007.

"Our goal is to provide Web based information that patients and consumers want to know about their community's available health care facilities and the quality and cost of the health care services provided," Dr. Medows said. "Our Web site can serve as both a source of unbiased information for patients and as a tool their physicians and health professionals can use to supplement their own patient education efforts. By empowering consumers with the ability to make informed choices about their health needs, we can improve the effectiveness and efficiency in the health care system."

The Health Information Transparency Web site will make information on cost, quality of care and availability of services accessible on the World Wide Web enabling beneficiaries of Medicaid Care Management Organizations (CMOs), Georgia's Uninsured Plans, the State Health Benefit Plans and all consumers of health care in Georgia to make informed choices about their health care. The site will also incorporate disease management and wellness information for users.

Health Information Technology (HIT) is one enabler for transformation of the U.S. health care system. President George W. Bush indicated his support for the use of HIT in April 2004 when he called for the widespread adoption of HIT by 2014.

On October 17, 2006, Governor Sonny Perdue issued an executive order creating the Health Information Technology and Transparency (HITT) Advisory Board. The Board advises DCH on the best practices for encouraging the use of electronic health records and establishing a statewide strategy to enable health information to be readily available and transparent. DCH goals for HIT in Georgia are to enable the understandable, universal, timely and secure communication of health information across the public and private sectors for the benefit of today's health care consumer. By receiving this federal grant of \$3,929,855, the money will fund 79.7 percent of the project in Federal Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008. The Web site will be launched in 2008.