



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioner Named Co-Chair for the National Governors Association's State Alliance for e-Health Taskforce

ATLANTA – **National Governors Association** appointed **Commissioner Rhonda Medows**, MD, FAAFP, to co-chair their Health Information Communication and Data Exchange Taskforce today. The taskforce is charged with addressing the appropriate roles for publicly funded health programs in interoperable, electronic health information exchange (HIE).

"I am extremely honored to have been selected to co-chair this taskforce," said Dr. Rhonda Medows. "Health Information Technology represents both opportunity and responsibility— the opportunity to utilize the advances in technology to achieve improved health care quality through data integration, coordination and efficient information exchange and the responsibility to ensure the patient's privacy, the data's security and its appropriate use."

In October 2006, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) created the **State Alliance for e-Health**, an initiative designed to improve the nation's health care system by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the health information technology (HIT) initiatives. The State Alliance for e-Health will be composed of elected and appointed officials including governors, state legislators, attorneys general, and insurance commissioners. In the initial year, the State Alliance will meet quarterly (beginning in January 2007) to address state-level health IT issues including barriers to interoperability, privacy and security issues, and state law and regulatory barriers to health IT related to the practice of medicine.

The National Governor's Association's State Alliance for e-Health will be supported by three taskforces, which will be composed of key stakeholders at the state-level who can provide expertise and experience in addressing state-level health IT issues and present recommendations to the State Alliance

The Health Information Communication and Data Exchange Taskforce will develop and advance actionable policy statements, resolutions and recommendations for referral to the State Alliance to inform their decision-making process in addressing ways in which states can enhance Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Programs, employee health benefits and public health through cooperative HIE activities with the private sector.

The State Alliance for e-Health was developed under a contract with the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services'** Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. It provides a forum through which Governors, elected state officials and other policymakers can work together to identify inter- and intrastate-based HIT policies and best practices.

The first meeting of the Health Information Communication and Data Exchange Taskforce will be held May 15-16, 2007 in Washington, DC.

In addition, May 14-18, 2007 is National Health IT Week in Washington. Multiple organizations will be meeting and engaging in collaborative efforts to accelerate national health information technology adoption. Organizations with diverse perspectives on health care will be gathering in Washington, DC, and on Capital Hill to address issues the goal of improving health care efficiency, quality, cost-effectiveness and patient safety through health IT.

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RESPONSIBLE health planning and use of health care resources

HEALTHY behaviors and improved health outcomes

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