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OCHIN Wins National Social Security Administration Contract  
*To provide technology that speeds up disability application decisions*

Portland, Oregon – Recently, OCHIN was notified that their proposal to integrate electronic medical records with the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) disability programs had been approved. OCHIN will use the \$280,000 grant to develop software to connect electronic medical records, which will be sent through the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) to the Social Security Administration. This process will significantly shorten the time it takes to make a disability decision and improve the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of SSA disability programs.

OCHIN is a non-profit collaborative of 32 west coast and Midwest community health centers. The collaborative has a combined database of nearly 1 million individual patients. In addition to providing practice management and electronic medical records software and services to community-based clinics, the collaborative also partners with governmental, university and community based organizations to improve population-based health.

Abigail Sears, OCHIN’s CEO said, “OCHIN is honored to provide technological assistance to the SSA. Expediting disability application decisions for people who are suffering is a wonderful use of this technology. Connecting to NHIN is part of our strategy to increase the work of health information exchanges (HIE) across the country.”

“Using health information technology will improve our disability programs and provide better service to the public,” said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security Commissioner. “We’ve seen a significant increase in disability applications. To process them, the agency sends more than 15 million requests annually for medical records to healthcare providers. This largely paper-bound workload is generally the most time-consuming part of the disability decision process. The use of health IT will dramatically improve the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of

this process, reducing the cost of making a disability decision for both the medical community and the American taxpayer.”

The SSA contract awards are funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. OCHIN will be required to obtain patient authorization to send Social Security electronic medical records through the NHIN. An Initiative of the Department of Health and Human Services, supported by multiple government agencies and private sector entities, the NHIN is a safe and secure method for receiving access to electronic medical records over the Internet.

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