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[OCHIN Joins Fight to Prevent Blindness Using Telemedicine](#)

Portland, Oregon – According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in America. Compared with the general population, people with diabetes are 25-30 times more likely to lose their sight from retinopathy, cataracts or glaucoma. Today OCHIN introduces new telemedicine software to prevent blindness.

With a generous grant from the Blue Shield of California Foundation, and in collaboration with the Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County, OCHIN developers designed an interface between the OCHIN/Epic electronic medical record and EyePACS® - Picture Archive Communication System for Eye Care. EyePacs is a new software system designed to speed diagnosis of diabetic-eye disease in the community health clinic setting.

“OCHIN is pleased to offer this new technology to help our member clinics ensure timely detection and prevention of eye diseases,” said Susan Chauvie, OCHIN’s chief clinical officer. With this new technology, patients get screened for diabetic retinopathy and other diseases of the eye without ever having to leave the clinic or return for results. Using this technology, clinics save both time and money because the eye is scanned in the clinic, then sent electronically for reading by a trained professional. The results are sent directly to the patients’ electronic chart where the provider can take immediate action on the patients’ behalf.

EyePACS® was originally designed by Dr. Jorge Cuadros and a team of developers from U.C. Berkley Eye Center with a grant from the California Health Care Foundation and the California Tele-health and e-Health Center. The system is available to all members of the OCHIN collaborative in Oregon, Washington and California. Santa Cruz Health Department and the Community Health Alliance of Pasadena will be the first clinic systems to use EyePACS®. “OCHIN will provide EyePACS® free of charge to our members in support of our ongoing commitment and mission *to improve the health of the medically underserved through the best use of information and information technology*”, said Chauvie.

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About the Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County:

The Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County (HIP) is a nonprofit coalition of public and private health care leaders dedicated to increasing access to health care and building stronger local health care systems. In an industry dominated by fragmentation and competition, HIP provides a common voice for health care improvement on behalf of the community and serves as an incubator of effective solutions. HIP's main initiatives involve increasing access to care, promoting health information technology in health care settings and cultivating broad-based partnership to improve community health and promote better chronic disease management.

About EyePACS:

The UC Berkeley Optometric Eye Center (UCBOEC) developed EyePACS, a store-and-forward clinical communication system that has been used successfully for diabetic retinopathy screening in diverse clinical settings. By providing near real-time interpretation of retinal images, clinicians at UC Berkeley specifically trained in diabetic retinopathy detection can provide patients with detection and referral at the time of their primary care visit with training, certification, and quality assurance for retinal reading and education for patients about their condition.

The telemedicine project started as a pilot program in 2005 in California's Central Valley, where 13 diabetic eye-screening sites were set up in primary care clinics. In addition to the Central Valley clinics, was used by other organizations in California and Mexico. The pilot project to prevent diabetes-related blindness was proven so successful that in 2007 it was expanded across the state, with a goal of serving 100 clinics and 100,000 patients.

EyePACS® has created a network of diabetic retinopathy screening sites in existing primary care clinics throughout California and is rapidly expanding to Oregon and other states.

About OCHIN

In 2000, the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) Community Access Program (CAP) awarded OCHIN a \$2 million grant to begin the process of designing and building a secure, reliable, high-speed, private network for delivering practice management software to community-based clinics. Seven years later, OCHIN has met that challenge and now provides software to safety-net medical, dental and, soon, mental health clinics throughout the west coast. In addition, OCHIN's electronic medical records software is moving clinics to secure and paperless efficiency, along with state-of-the-art centralized billing services and a master patient index. OCHIN uses world-class information system software developed by Epic Systems, Inc., and made affordable through generous grants from Epic and HRSA.

OCHIN has grown from a small \$2 million start-up housed in CareOregon (Oregon's largest non-profit Medicaid-managed care plan) to an \$8 million safety-net clinic collaborative. Today, it is a west coast collaborative Health Center Controlled Network (HCCN) with 21 safety-net clinic members, with over

150 individual clinic sites annually serving over 500,000 patients. OCHIN is one of only a few organizations in the country that is capturing aggregate health care data and statistics on low-income and uninsured populations. These patients are predominately poor (66 percent below federal poverty level), disproportionately Medicaid/MediCal (42 percent), and uninsured (48 percent). 60% are women and children, and 38 percent are of Hispanic/Latino descent, while 33 percent are from rural communities.

HCCN:

A Health Center Controlled Network (HCCN) is a federal designation given to an organization that acts on behalf of a 51% health center controlled board of directors, representing at least 3 collaborative organizations.

OCHIN Members:

[Asher Community Health Center](#)
[Benton County Health Department](#)
[Clackamas County Public Health Department](#)
[Community Health Alliance of Pasadena](#)
[Community Health Centers of Lane County](#)
[Cowlitz Family Health Center](#)
[Deschutes County Health Department](#)
[Klamath County Public Health Department](#)
[Klamath Open Door Family Practice](#)
[La Clinica del Valle Family Health Care Centers](#)
[Lincoln Community Health Center](#)

[Monterey County Health Department](#)
[Mosaic Medical](#)
[Multnomah County Health Department](#)
[OHSU Family Medicine at Scappoose](#)
[OHSU Family Medicine at Richmond](#)
[Pasadena Public Health Department](#)
[Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency](#)
[Santa Cruz Women's Health Center](#)
[Tillamook County Health Department](#)
[Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center](#)

For more information about OCHIN, please visit www.ochin.org or call 503.943.2500.