

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 14, 2004

CONTACT: GARY BOWERS
(828) 232-2940

WNC HEALTH NETWORK TO ELECTRONICALLY LINK AREA HOSPITALS

The Western North Carolina Health Network (“WNC Network”), a collaboration of the areas’ 16 hospitals, 13 county health departments and health care providers, received two grants totaling \$2.5 million from the Department of Health and Human Services through the efforts of Congressman Taylor for the purposes of electronically linking the area hospitals and other health care providers.

CareScience, an operating unit of [Quovadx, Inc.](#) providing care management and clinical data sharing solutions, has been selected to conduct assessment and implementation planning for the proposed data link system. Once implemented, the system will provide secure access to clinical patient data for the region’s hospitals and physicians, in an effort to improve the quality of patient care, one of Congressman Taylor’s primary goals for our community.

“The hospitals in the WNC Network continually strive to improve patient care across the counties we serve,” said Mark Leonard, WNC Network President. “We believe that providing physician access to complete electronic medical records for patients moving between regional health care providers will improve the quality of care we provide. In addition, we expect to decrease time spent on administrative tasks, lowering costs and allowing more funds to be used for pressing medical issues in our community, such as indigent care.”

The grant funds are administered by the Education and Research Consortium of the Western Carolinas, a local non-profit organization Congressman Taylor was instrumental in forming and funding to help the people and economy of WNC engage in and benefit from the new technology revolution.

The WNC Network was created in the early 1990's to identify cost-effective, collaborative opportunities among WNC hospitals and healthcare systems. The Network helps its members meet the challenges of the changing healthcare environment in western North Carolina in a variety of areas, including quality initiatives, community health benefits and cost savings.

“Each WNC Network member hospital operates independently and has invested significant time and funds into building its own technology systems. Therefore, it was imperative that we identify a way to tie these systems together, without infringing on the security, privacy and ownership of the data contained in each hospital’s proprietary IT system,” added Gary Bowers, Executive Director of the Network. “Through the help of Congressman Charles Taylor and grants from HHS, we were able to identify a partner that fit our needs and to fund the first phase of the solution. We look forward to expanding our clinical data sharing goals to support the Network’s community health initiatives, such as improving asthma treatment, in the future.”

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