



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
C. Ray Nagin, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPLORING LIFELONG MEDICAL RECORDS

NEW ORLEANS—(February 26, 2007)—Losing paper medical records during Hurricane Katrina had deadly consequences for many patients, according to Dr. Kevin Stephens, director, City of New Orleans Health Department.

“Very sick patients left New Orleans with very little of their medical history which was a great challenge to the physicians treating them in other parts of the country,” said Stephens.

The City of New Orleans Health Department has agreed to work with Dossia, an employer coalition funding the development of an independent web-based system that will enable employees, their dependents and retirees to maintain lifelong, electronic health records to provide these types of records to eligible recipients and clients of the Health Department. The Dossia Founders include Applied Materials, BP America, Inc. Cardinal Health, Intel, Pitney Bowes and Wal-Mart.

“The Health Department and Dossia are developing a demonstration project to provide a lifelong electronic health record to specific populations of New Orleans citizens,” Stephens said. “Initial plans are for the record to be offered on a voluntary basis to pregnant women and their newborns, once they deliver.”

The records will be both private and portable. Patients may view the information on their computer and can also share their information with other providers.

Stephens said that many patients who see multiple providers could benefit from this type of information sharing since it can strengthen the communication between physician and patient.

According to Omid Moghadam, Dossia executive director and director of Intel's Personal Health Records Group, the consortium's goal is to promote widespread adoption of the lifelong electronic health record. Employers are leading this initiative and agreeing to offer this opportunity to their employees.

"The Dossia Founders are also interested in offering the infrastructure to other large groups such as communities like New Orleans, where there is a critical need to provide a lifelong electronic record for residents," said Moghadam.

The Health Department and Dossia will work with Omnimedix Institute, a not-for-profit organization building the Dossia infrastructure, to develop grant applications seeking funding from charitable foundations to support the delivery of Dossia to New Orleans citizens.

"We are grateful to Dossia for recognizing the need here in New Orleans and joining with us to ensure that no matter what comes our way in the future, our patients will have uninterrupted medical care no matter how far from home," said Stephens.

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