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**California Regional Health Information Organization (CalRHIO)
Announces Year Two Plans**

**Linking Emergency Departments, Data Sharing Standards, and
Personal Health Records Top Priorities**

**San Francisco Summit Brings Together State and
National Leaders, Including David Brailer**

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., Feb. 22, 2006 – The California Regional Health Information Organization, CalRHIO (calrhio.org), marked its successful first year with release of an aggressive 2006 agenda that promises to take California patients significantly closer to having secure electronic health records that are accessible when and where they are needed. CalRHIO is a collaborative statewide initiative to improve the safety, quality and efficiency of health care through the use of information technology and secure data exchange.

“Over the past year, CalRHIO created -- for the first time -- a statewide community of health care providers, payers, government, and consumer organizations committed to the secure exchange of information and investment in information technology,” said Molly Coye, MD, president of the Health Technology Center, where CalRHIO was incubated before it applied for independent 50(c)3 status in December 2005. “For 2006, our focus will be on developing pilot projects to test health information exchange standards and solutions.”

CalRHIO’s 2006 agenda will be discussed at its third statewide Summit, February 28, in San Francisco. Featured speakers include David Brailer, MD, Ph.D, national coordinator for health information technology and Cindy Ehnes, director of the California Department of Managed Care, who is coordinating the State’s health information technology response.

According to CalRHIO Interim CEO Lori Hack, more than 60 organizations and 140 individuals have participated in CalRHIO work groups, committees, and projects. “As a

result, there is communication and agreement among key California stakeholders regarding priorities and strategy for health information exchange in our state.” Initiatives for 2006 include the following:

1. CalRHIO will soon release a list of data sharing standards that California health care providers can use as a guide in purchasing or managing the upgrades of their systems, and vendors can follow in upgrading their products
2. Recommendations will be released in the next several weeks regarding a statewide infrastructure or backbone to enable the correct identification, location, and confidential access to a patient records – wherever they are located.
3. Standardized data sharing agreements are being prepared that define the terms under which data will be provided and exchanged, including protocols for handling sensitive data and monitoring who can access data.
4. A recommended clinical data set will be released soon to help data sources understand what they must be able to provide to participate in data exchange, help data users understand the kind of information they will be able to obtain, and define for consumers the information that will be shared with authorized users.

The first pilot project is aimed at enabling emergency departments throughout the State to access critical information from outside sources such as pharmacies, laboratories, and health plans. Other pilots may test the use of personal health records and accessing medication data.

In addition, CalRHIO is working with State and national efforts to ensure that patient privacy is protected and security of data exchange exceeds requirements.

For more information and a copy of CalRHIOs “Stakeholder Report”, visit www.calrhio.org.

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