



PRESS RELEASE:

MAYOR BLOOMBERG HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE AT INSTITUTE FOR URBAN FAMILY HEALTH

May 1, 2006, New York, New York: Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg visited the headquarters of the Institute for Urban Family Health on April 26 for a demonstration of the power of electronic health records (EHRs) in improving the health of New Yorkers. The Mayor was joined by Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Thomas R. Frieden to announce that the City has appropriated \$27 million to help provide EHR systems for community health centers.

The Institute, a 23 year old organization that operates federally qualified community health centers in medically underserved neighborhoods in the Bronx and Manhattan, is the first community health center network in New York City to have a fully implemented electronic health record system. In recognition of this achievement and the benefits realized by the patients treated at the Institute, Neil Calman, MD, the Institute's President and CEO, was the recipient of the 2006 Physician's Information Technology Leadership Award, presented annually by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society. Dr. Calman also serves on the executive committee of the newly established citywide Primary Care Health Information Consortium and on the New York State Department of Health's Information Technology Stakeholder Group Planning Committee.

Four years ago, Dr. Calman led the Institute in its implementation of Epic, a fully integrated electronic health record (EHR,) across the Institute's network of ambulatory care sites. The EHR has enhanced the organization's capacity to deliver the highest quality patient care by minimizing the possibility of medical errors and increasing opportunities for preventive care. The Institute has used the Epic system to develop clinical decision supports, also called best practice alerts. These electronic alerts remind patients and providers about opportunities for preventive care, medication allergies, and harmful drug interactions.

The Institute's EHR also provides reports of patients who have missed critical preventive measures so that outreach staff can call them for appointments, and provides pre-formatted letters to enhance communication with patients. To engage patients even further in their own care, patients are encouraged to watch the computer screen in the exam room to see graphs and charts of critical findings, such as blood sugar, blood pressure levels or lab values over time. Patients are also given a copy of their progress note for the day, and, by the end of this year, will be able to access their records from home.

“Almost immediately after implementing the system, the Institute began to see positive changes in patient care. These included an 18-fold increase in the rate of pneumococcal vaccines administered, and a 55% increase in the rate of referrals for ophthalmology appointments in diabetic patients,” said Dr. Calman. “The number of women between the ages of 40 through 70 referred for mammograms doubled, and the rate of lead screening for two year olds increased by almost 20%.”

Since interconnectivity between electronic health records systems is the future of health information technology, the Institute has implemented its system to permit doctors to access patients’ medical records at any time, from any computer, through a private internet connection, which can save time, resources, and lives in an emergency. The system has also enabled the Institute to become the first primary care network to link with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s nationally renowned Syndromic Surveillance System, permitting the early recognition of disease outbreaks, including potential bioterrorism. “This shows the important difference EHRs can make in promoting both preventive care and public health,” commented New York City Commissioner of Health, Thomas Frieden, MD.

The Institute for Urban Family Health currently operates six federally funded community health centers, a school-based health center, and nine part-time clinics that serve the homeless. In addition, the Institute trains health professionals through a tri-state faculty development program and a residency-training program in family medicine, and engages in community-based participatory research related to racial and ethnic disparities funded by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and the New York State Department of Health.

Visit www.institute2000.org for more information.

Photo available upon request.

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