



Sponsor of the Voluntary Universal Healthcare Identifier

February 2010 Update

With the beginning of a new year – and with unprecedented government focus on health IT (HIT) – we want to bring everyone up to date on our ongoing efforts to promote and deploy the Voluntary Universal Identifier (VUHID) solution. Progress is slower than we'd like but 2009 ended with some promising activities, so we go into 2010 with high hopes and renewed energy.

For those of you who are receiving the GPII Newsletter for the first time, go to www.gpii.info/news.php for earlier issues and more information on GPII and VUHID.

Good News, Bad News...the Government is Here to Help!

No one in our industry can be unaware or unaffected by the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) which authorizes nearly \$30B for investment in electronic health records (EHRs), the nationwide health information network (NHIN), regional extension HIT centers, demonstration projects and education for an expanded HIT workforce.

After passage of ARRA in February last year, the remainder of 2009 was spent in defining criteria to qualify for stimulus funding and qualifying contractors to manage various projects. GPII has been involved in discussions with potential clients who are applying for funding, where VUHID identifiers would be used in regional health information exchange demonstration projects.

We've been impressed with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), which has oversight for how HIT-related ARRA funds

will be allocated. They have been very aggressive in meeting required deadlines, so we are optimistic that, if any of the projects with which we're involved receives funding, we'll be off and running by mid-year. Watch this space for updates!

Publications and Validation

- A number of new publications came out late last year that validate our work on VUHID, but the real coup was getting the recommendation from HIMSS for the government "to establish an informed patient identity solution" as part of its 2010 HIMSS Principles on Government Initiatives. The document that explores this topic is entitled Patient Identity Integrity, HIMSS Patient Identity Integrity Work Group, December, 2009, and is available at:

<http://www.himss.org/content/files/PrivacySecurity/PIIWhitePaper.pdf>

What does this mean? HIMSS, while not a lobbying organization, has tremendous influence on policymakers and legislators, both at the state and federal level. Their annual Principles on Government Initiatives document drives the efforts of thousands of HIMSS volunteers who meet with and educate government officials on HIT-related issues and topics. We now have visibility and support for eliminating the barriers that have prevented progress toward a unique identifier since the late 1990s. HIMSS staff and members of the Privacy and Security Workgroup that developed this particular position recognize that any work toward an NHIN will be undermined by the lack



VOLUNTARY UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE IDENTIFIER

of a unique identifier. This is a real victory for GPII and for the industry as a whole.

Other publications that validate our VUHID work include:

- *CAP Today*, November 2009, "National Patient ID: Could a Voluntary System Fill the Gap?" – Barry was interviewed in this article which strongly supports VUHID. "VUHID is a process that's going to take a long while to grow," said Dr. Raymond D. Aller, MD, director of automated disease surveillance systems for Los Angeles County. "We just have to get the word out, make people aware it exists, and work on getting support for it." The link to the article is: http://www.cap.org/apps/cap.portal?nfpb=true&cntvwrPtl{actionOverride=%2Fports%2FcontentViewer%2Fshow&windowLabel=cntvwrPtl{actionForm.contentTypeReference}=cap_today%2F1109%2F1109j_national_id.html&state=maximized&pageLabel=cntvwr



Barry Hieb, MD
Chief Scientist, GPII
520-320-6220
520-342-8457 (mobile)
bhieb@vuhid.org

- Another article expected to be published shortly provides an analysis of the cost of deploying the VUHID system. "A Cost Effective Method to Create a Universal Healthcare Identifier System", B. Hieb, *Electronic Journal of Health Informatics*, vol. 5(1), 2010, <http://www.ejhi.net/ojs/index.php/ejhi>

Fundraising

Clearly, our top priority is to raise sufficient capital to complete VUHID development work and support beta testing in 2010. We've found that granting organizations are feeling the pinch of the global economic downturn as much as commercial organizations. But we also find that general interest in VUHID continues to grow.

We appreciate your ongoing support and encourage you to spread the word on VUHID. If you have ideas on potential funding sources or beta sites, please send them along to either of us. All the best for a healthy, happy 2010 from the GPII team!



Elizabeth (Liddy) West, CPHIMS
Chief Marketing Officer, GPII
520-730-8212
ewest123@msn.com



VOLUNTARY UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE IDENTIFIER

GPII Board of Directors

- **James F. Kragh**, President & CEO, Good Health Network, Inc.
- **Rick Peters, MD**, AAFP, Center for Health Information Technology
- **Tom Sullivan, MD**, Chief Strategy Officer, Dr. First
- **Peter Waagemann**, CEO, Medical Records Institute
- **Clinical Advisor: Joseph Schneider, MD**, VP and CMIO, Medical Director Clinical Informatics, Baylor Health Care System

Go to www.gpii.info for more information on GPII and the VUHID project.

