



Sponsor of the Voluntary Universal Healthcare Identifier

## ***VUHID Project - January Update***

The GPII/VUHID team would like to take this opportunity to wish all our supporters a happy, healthy 2009. This is the time of year when we take stock of last year's accomplishments and set our priorities for the New Year, so we thought you might be interested in what we've been doing and what we're planning for 2009.

### **GPII is Official!**

As you all know by now, Barry Hieb left Gartner Healthcare in August to pursue his work on the Voluntary Universal Healthcare Identifier (VUHID) project on a full-time basis. Liddy West left HIMSS earlier in 2008 and was recruited by Dr. Hieb to work with him and bring her marketing and business development experience to bear on the project. And Rob MacMillan - persuaded by the compelling case for the VUHID solution to provide secure, cost effective patient identification, and the enthusiasm of Dr. Hieb and Ms. West - agreed to carve out time in his busy schedule to add his operations management

and strategic planning expertise to the team. Thus, Global Patient Identifiers, Inc. (GPII) was born. GPII is a non-profit organization focused solely on the continued development, deployment and marketing of VUHID.

We are fortunate to have five highly respected health IT professionals on the GPII Board of Directors:

- ***James F. Kragh***, President & CEO, Good Health Network, Inc.
- ***Skip McGaughey***, Executive Director, Open Health Tools
- ***Rick Peters, MD***, AAFP, Center for Health Information Technology
- ***Tom Sullivan, MD***, Chief Strategy Officer, Dr. First
- ***Peter Waegemann***, CEO, Medical Records Institute

In addition, our clinical advisor is:

- ***Joseph Schneider, MD***, VP and CMIO, Medical Director



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Clinical Informatics, Baylor  
Health Care System

Our first Board meeting was held in November, with plans to meet (virtually, of course) each quarter. But be assured that these individuals are engaged routinely in discussions concerning GPII's work, with particular focus on our financial future.

### Fundraising

Since VUHID was conceived by Dr. Hieb, based on ASTM standards that he helped develop, a driving premise has been that the unique patient identifier solution would not add cost to the healthcare system. The work that has been done to date (acquiring servers, hiring programming and web site support, marketing and outreach) has been supported primarily by private funding. Two notable exceptions:

- Our server was donated by Stratus. While our programmer works on a small desktop server, the Stratus server hums away in Barry's office and supports development and performance testing.
- And Judy Faulkner, CEO of Epic Systems, made a generous donation of \$10,000.

We are extremely grateful for this support and send many thanks to Judy and our friends at Stratus.

Much of our time over the past several months has been focused on fundraising. Our business plan for the first two years of GPII operations is based on the assumption that grant funding will support the completion of software development, beta testing at two or three HIEs or RHIOs, marketing and educational outreach. After that time, it is expected that revenues will offset operational expenses, using any profits to further enhance the system or to invest in other non-profit efforts.

As many of you know, the granting business is a discipline unto itself. We've learned much but have had little success to date. We continue to pursue these opportunities, as well as to solicit "micro grants" from individuals and organizations that have expressed their support of our work. If you would like to contribute, or have ideas about where GPII might find financial support, contact us at [www.vuhid.org](http://www.vuhid.org) or directly by phone or e-mail (see below).

### Marketing and Outreach Efforts

Speaking of our web site, look for a new design and additional



content in early February. Dr. Hieb and Ms. West, as many Chief Scientists and Chief Marketing Officers before them, have developed the kind of yin/yang relationship that depends on finding the balance between technical nuance and clear messaging. We look forward to your feedback!

And Barry continues to proselytize to an increasing number of people who want to learn about VUHID. We have a number of opportunities that could result in beta sites in 2009, as well as more exposure and involvement in state and national dialogs regarding healthcare reform where the topic of a single patient identifier is relevant. It's all about networking, and not a week goes by that we don't get an inquiry or opportunity to bring another person or group into the VUHID discussion.

Liddy got good coverage on <http://histalk2.com/2008/11/17/an-hit-moment-with-liddy-west/> in November when she was interviewed by Mr. HIS Talk about her work on the VUHID project. This resulted in a number of useful inquiries as well.

And, of course, the RAND Corporation published its white paper, "Identity Crisis: An Examination of the Costs and Benefits of a Unique Patient Identifier for the U.S. Health Care System" (available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monogra>

[phs/2008/RAND\\_MG753.pdf](http://phs/2008/RAND_MG753.pdf)).

Barry's earlier work is cited several times but, more importantly, the paper makes a strong case for the implementation of a unique healthcare identifier. Its estimates of the costs, however, may be the only troublesome aspect of the article -- \$11 billion!!

The GPII business plan shows that such a system, based on the VUHID approach, can be developed, deployed and supported in the first five years for approximately 1/500<sup>th</sup> of that estimate. We're working hard to make this point in a number of upcoming presentations.

- Barry is making two presentations at the TEPR conference in Palm Springs, CA in early February. Go to <http://www.medrecinst.com/TEPR/TEPR.php> for more details.
- He will also present at HIMSS09 in Chicago in April. More details are available at [www.himss09.org](http://www.himss09.org).

### **Late Breaking News!**

On January 12, Booz Allen Hamilton published "*Toward Health Information Liquidity: Realization of Better, More Efficient Care from the Free Flow of Health Information*" which adds



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validation to our premise that a universal patient identifier is an essential component of healthcare transformation. Check it out at: [www.boozallen.com/media/file/health-information-liquidity.pdf](http://www.boozallen.com/media/file/health-information-liquidity.pdf)

### **What's Next?**

Our focus in 2009 is clearly on fundraising to support:

- Completing VUHID development work to support beta testing later in the year.
- The creation of a generic design spec for EMPI vendors to understand what software changes will be required in their systems to work with VUHID.
- Establishing a data center relationship so that the VUHID servers are physically and operationally secure.
- We will also be finalizing the server and client software needed to make the commercial version of VUHID a reality.
- Development of educational materials for consumers so they understand the benefits of participating in the VUHID program offered by their healthcare providers.
- Evaluation of other potential sources of revenue and

support - e.g., the use of VUHID identifiers for medical devices.

- Ongoing outreach and education to gain support and participation in the VUHID project.

It's clear as we anticipate a new administration in Washington that there will be opportunities for VUHID as President Obama looks for solutions to the economic, access and quality challenges in today's healthcare delivery model. To date, discussions have been framed from the perspective that either patient privacy or the ability to share clinical information will have to be sacrificed in order to make progress. The VUHID system offers an effective alternative where both privacy protections and information sharing can be achieved based on unambiguous patient identification. We continue to work on getting this message out to legislators and policymakers, and appreciate your support of these efforts in your own discussions with these individuals.

Again, we wish you all well in 2009 and look forward to your feedback, ideas and ongoing support as we continue to work toward achieving the benefits that VUHID can deliver - more efficient, more secure sharing of clinical information based on accurate patient identification



resulting in safer, more effective  
medical care.

Barry Hieb, MD  
CPHIMS

Chief Scientist  
Officer

520-320-6220

[bhib@vuhid.org](mailto:bhib@vuhid.org)

Elizabeth (Liddy) West,

Chief          Marketing

520-730-8212

[ewest123@msn.com](mailto:ewest123@msn.com)

*Go to [www.vuhid.org](http://www.vuhid.org) for more information on GPII  
and the VUHID project. And look for our new web  
design and content in early February, and let us  
know what you think!*



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