



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **\$9.125 Million from Recovery and Reinvestment Act to Operate Wisconsin Health Information Technology Extension Center (WHITEC)**

MADISON, WI -- A Madison-based consortium comprised of the Wisconsin Medical Society, the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association, the Wisconsin Hospital Association, the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, and MetaStar, Inc., today announced it has been awarded a federal grant, funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The four-year, \$9.125 million grant provides funding for the operation of the Wisconsin Health Information Technology Extension Center (WHITEC), which will provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to Wisconsin physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners in selecting, implementing, and using health information technology (HIT) to improve the quality and value of health care.

According to Greg Simmons, MetaStar president and CEO, “the consortium members envision that through WHITEC Wisconsin health care professionals will have access to expert, independent, technical assistance and will be able to use HIT to improve care. The plan is to initially provide assistance to approximately 1,625 primary care professionals and grow from there.” WHITEC will provide customized assistance to help them step through the process of incorporating HIT into their practices, including strategic planning, workflow redesign, selection of and contracting with a technology vendor, installation, implementation and security of the system, and, finally, working toward meaningful use of HIT. “The efforts of WHITEC will support Wisconsin’s health care professionals in transforming healthcare delivery through the use of electronic health records. I applaud the work of the public-private partnership that has gotten us to this point and assure them that the State of Wisconsin will continue to assist in this endeavor,” commented Karen Timberlake, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

The consortium members will provide strategic guidance to WHITEC, which will be operated as a division of MetaStar, a non-profit quality improvement organization based in Madison. “We anticipate that approximately 25 new jobs will be created as a result of this grant,” stated Jesi Wang, MetaStar vice president and project director for WHITEC, “Staff will be located at MetaStar, the Wisconsin Medical Society, or the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association as well as throughout the state in order to provide local assistance.”

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Each consortium member has been involved with the promotion of and assistance with HIT during the past few years and each bring different strengths to the table. “Combining forces for this opportunity made the most sense instead of competing against one another or having the state split into several extension centers,” said Susan Turney, MD, CEO/executive vice president of the Wisconsin Medical Society. “We feel that by creating this consortium we have a strong technology center with the expertise and breadth of experience to provide the services needed for Wisconsin health care professionals to become meaningful users of HIT,” added Turney.

For more information about WHITEC, visit [www.whitec.org](http://www.whitec.org). To learn more about the national health information technology extension program, visit <http://healthit.hhs.gov>.

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