

For Immediate Release

Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center to start using Electronic Health Records thanks to gift from Kaiser Permanente and others

System will improve care, increase efficiencies and decrease health care disparities for the vulnerable.

Hillsboro,OR (April 14, 2009) - Teresa is an insulin using diabetic, requiring consistent, frequent medical care to keep her condition from turning much more serious, even life threatening. But that care was out of reach for Teresa: the 52 year-old has no income or insurance and is supported by her family. So, like thousands of others in her position, Teresa has gone from doctor to doctor. She even suffered eye-damage and other complications because of lack of consistent care and lack of understanding about her medication regimen. Sometimes a new provider ordered tests to be repeated because the previous results could not be located and Teresa lacked the ability to relay complicated test results, insulin doses, and other health information from one provider to another. The result: care that was uncoordinated, inefficient, and bad for Teresa's health.

Teresa took a big step toward a healthier life when she found the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center (Virginia Garcia). Now she has a "healthcare home," with access to consistent primary care. That care will soon be even better. Thanks to a gift from Kaiser Permanente and other community partners, Virginia Garcia will be using Electronic Health Records (EHR) in their Hillsboro Clinic starting April 27. This means that Teresa's health records will always be available to her providers- be it a diabetes specialist, doctor, dentist, or mental health counselor. Before finding Virginia Garcia, Teresa's paper health records were housed in different locations, and her providers had little or no communication with one another about her care. With EHR, clinicians will gain access to her test results, medications and insulin doses, and any other health information that would be important for her providers to understand when working with Teresa to determine courses of care. EHR can be a lifesaving tool in an emergency, when vital health information is needed to make quick medical decisions.

President Obama is a believer in the need for EHR, and has said he wants national implementation within five years. EHR "won't just save billions of dollars and thousands of jobs," the President said recently, "(EHR) will save lives by reducing the deadly but preventable medical errors that pervade our health care system."

Gil Munoz, Virginia Garcia's CEO stated, "implementation of electronic health records will ensure that the 10,000 patients at Virginia Garcia's Hillsboro Clinic will have access to timely, efficient, and high quality care." Munoz added, "Kaiser's support of this important project is a huge investment in the quality of healthcare to the vulnerable members of our community."

Implementing EHR is not a simple undertaking.

It requires an investment of time, money, and resources. Virginia Garcia hopes to one day install EHR at all its facilities, with a projected cost of nearly \$2 million. EHR at Virginia Garcia's Hillsboro clinic will come thanks to a cash gift from Kaiser Permanente of \$250,000. Kaiser Permanente has also invested an additional nearly \$92,000 in training and support to effectively and efficiently implement EHR at this site. Their charitable support combined with partnerships with the Spirit Mountain Community Fund and the Peierls Foundation will make EHR possible and transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable populations in the region. The generosity of these prominent organizations will help Virginia Garcia to provide even higher quality healthcare to their patients while helping to close the gap in health care for minorities, the elderly, and for low-income populations. This is a remarkable way members of the community have pulled together to support their neighbors, like Teresa, who are most vulnerable.

To learn more about Virginia Garcia visit their website at www.virginiagarcia.org. To learn more about Kaiser Permanente visit www.kaiserpermanente.org. To find out more about the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, visit their website at www.thecommunityfund.com.

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