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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Regence grant helps clinic build electronic “medical home”
Patient care benefits from comprehensive, connective health records

Portland, Ore. — The benefits of a “medical home” for patients are increasingly recognized as promoting more timely, efficient and accurate health care while streamlining use of medical services. A \$100,000 Regence Foundation grant to the Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation will help fund an electronic version of a medical home for thousands of Oregon residents.

“This is the future for all of us: Records of our diagnosis and treatment by all providers, centralized and portable,” said Mike Alexander, Regence Foundation board chair. “Electronic health records are essential because they optimize patient care and outcomes and minimize mistakes, delays and duplication of services.”

The Regence Foundation’s grant – one of three technology grants awarded in July – will help fund the purchase of hardware and software to support the electronic medical records of patients at Virginia Garcia clinics, which can then be accessed by any clinic in Our Community Health Information Network (OCHIN).

The electronic health records (EHR) will include such information as diagnoses, allergies, lab test results and medications. It will also allow providers to enter and store orders for prescriptions, tests and other services in a computer-based system that enhances legibility. This tool enables all providers to coordinate and deliver care in a more timely and efficient way, increasing patient safety and effectiveness of care.

Virginia Garcia's mission is to provide high quality, comprehensive and culturally appropriate primary healthcare to the communities of Washington and Yamhill Counties with a special emphasis on migrant and seasonal farmworkers and others with barriers to receiving health care. "While the majority of Virginia Garcia patients are Hispanic/Latino, all patients with barriers to receiving health care are welcome," reports Diana Walker, the executive director of the Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation. "Almost 90% of our patients earn 200% of the Federal Poverty Level – that is just over \$41,000 a year for a family of four. With the documented gaps in care for ethnic, racial and socioeconomic populations, EHR will help us to reduce the health disparities in our patient populations. This is a very exciting opportunity and we are very grateful to the Regence Foundation for their investment in the lives of our patients."

"The Regence Foundation finds an excellent fit with the aims of Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation and their electronic health records project," says Alexander. "Providing an electronic medical home is especially important for those in our communities who often face barriers to receiving consistent, quality care and those who have to move frequently because of their work."

About The Regence Foundation

The Regence Foundation is the corporate foundation of The Regence Group, the largest health insurer in the Northwest/Intermountain region and a not-for-profit independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. A 501(c)(3) grantmaking organization, the Foundation partners with organizations driving significant change in health care delivery and accessibility in Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Starting in late 2008, the Foundation will also partner with organizations addressing end-of-life issues.

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