

# Health Quest Network Consortium

## Network Plan

### **Background**

Health Quest is the region's leading provider of comprehensive healthcare services. With award-winning programs, nationally-recognized physicians, world-class technology and a sincere commitment to the community, Health Quest is delivering the kind of advanced healthcare most commonly found in large metropolitan centers.

A private, not-for-profit organization, Health Quest serves the region through a network of affiliates which include Vassar Brothers Medical Center - Poughkeepsie, NY, Northern Dutchess Hospital – Rhinebeck, NY, Putnam Hospital – Carmel, NY, as well as Health Quest physician practices. Each of these facilities is distinguished by the high quality of their programs and services, and by the credentials, skill and compassion of their physicians, nurses and caregivers.

Health Quest Consortium was created in 2015 for the purpose of providing management and structure to the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) project, Health Quest will be the Consortium Leader with oversight, management, and administration of the HCFP project which is comprised of eligible healthcare providers (HCPs).

Health Quest intends to utilize HCF funds to enable additional connectivity for eligible health care entities in as many communities as possible within New York.

### **Goals and Objectives of the Proposed Network**

Health Quest is a consortium of health care entities sharing a common goal of instantaneous communication of medical information by utilizing and sharing technology.

Health Quest Consortium has a mission to introduce and integrate telehealth technology seamlessly within healthcare organizations. The broadband network is bringing innovative telehealth services to rural populations enabling health care organizations to make a difference in the lives of the communities they serve. A principle goal, through connectivity, is to create improvements in patient care by making available both critical care and new ground breaking healthcare applications to rural users. Specific uses include (but are not limited to):

- Intra- and inter-region secure medical records sharing;
- Converting patient paper medical records to electronic health records (EHRs)
- Connectivity to other regional health care networks and national interoperability initiatives; and
- Enabling the deployment and use of various telehealth applications in a rural environment through large bandwidth connectivity.

The Health Quest Consortium is committed to providing high bandwidth speeds to HCPs in rural areas to support critical applications needed for patient care at lower costs. The objectives of this project include:

- Maximizing the investment in the private owned fiber network or equivalent and the last mile connections, by adding new participants to the Health Quest Consortium to provide high speed broadband connections to support telehealth services;
- Providing a lower cost of business through broadband technological solutions for the consortia participants; and
- Providing the foundation to provide Health Information Exchange and telehealth by linking providers to provide better patient care.

### **Strategy for Aggregating the Specific Needs of HCPs** (including providers that serve rural areas) **within the State**

Health Quest Consortium will continue to engage in a regional approach to coordinate and create opportunities to share and strengthen healthcare technologies utilizing available broadband networks.

Health Quest will facilitate collective Consortium needs through strategies including:

- Consortium building/strengthening - to promote minimum and best practices through the recruitment of new participants and enhancement of the capabilities of existing participants;
- Expanded service offerings – to coordinate exploration of new service offerings within the Consortium;
- Telehealth Initiative – to continue to be a leader in the telehealth initiative, to expand Health Quest telehealth program benefiting rural consortia participants; and
- Economies of scales – to promote administrative efficiencies, by offering centralized functions including fair and open competitive bidding process to select connections and services at a lower cost to meet their needs.

## **Strategy for Leveraging Existing Technology to Adopt the Most Efficient and Cost Effective Means of Connecting Providers**

Health Quest will utilize their network, local data centers and leased fiber lines or equivalent to connect to a larger data center. The network will provide faster broadband connections to healthcare providers in rural areas at a lower cost to support Health Information Exchange (HIE) and telehealth applications.

Health Quest will build upon this successful strategy to leverage existing technology investments that healthcare providers can benefit from as a participant in the Health Quest Consortium. Communication services and technologies are driving efficiencies and cost savings across a wide array of healthcare providers.

Health Quest provides the vehicle to build a strategy that puts these services and technologies to work for the healthcare providers that are connected to the Healthcare Systems Consortium network.

## **How the Broadband Services Will Be Used to Improve or Provide Health Care Delivery**

The goal of this project is to facilitate, through connectivity, improvements in patient care by making available both critical care and new ground breaking health care applications to rural users. As provided on pgs. 1-2, specific uses include (but are not limited to):

- Intra- and inter-region secure medical records sharing;
- Converting patient paper medical records to electronic health records (EHRs)
- Connectivity to other regional health care networks and national interoperability initiatives; and
- Enabling the deployment and use of various telehealth applications in a rural environment through large bandwidth connectivity.

## **Previous Experience in Developing and Managing Health IT (including telemedicine) Programs**

Health Quest has developed an Information Technology strategy that includes a Health Information Exchange throughout New York, a new state-of-the-art physician practice system for both hospital-employed and community based physicians.

Providing caregivers with instant access to patient information provides better patient safety and care. Some of the advanced clinical system tools available at Health Quest are:

- Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE)
- Patient Care System/ Nursing Documentation (PCS)
- Bedside Medication Verification (BMV)

In support of these advanced clinical systems, an advanced infrastructure and data center is needed. At Health Quest, we have made the investment in technology and applications all in support of providing caregivers with instant access to patient information.

To balance the need for advanced clinical systems and advanced technology, Health Quest is also dedicated to the education and knowledge of our resources that are the ultimate backbone of the entire technology system.

### **Project Management Plan Outlining the Project's Leadership and Management Structure, and a work plan, schedule, and budget.**

Health Quest will be the lead management entity and applicant for the FCC Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) program. Health Quest Consortium will comply with all regulations pertaining to the HCF program.

Health Quest Consortium will have a leadership team that consists of Robert Soden Director of Network/Telecom Services, Jeff Loskowitz, Senior Director of Business Operations, and Proper Connections, Consulting Management Services.

Administration services, to include monthly HCP and USAC billing, will be performed by Proper Connections. Health Quest will be responsible for committing the 35% cost share for the federally funded equipment and services for this project.

#### **Work plan and Schedule**

Action Item Timeline – Q1

HCP Eligibility Established and Identified - Q2

RFP Developed and Posted Q3 -

Vendor Bid Evaluation Begins 29 days from Posted Services Date.

Evaluation period is 14 days

Contracting between Health Quest Consortium and Vendors Q3

Project initiated per contract and service agreement terms Q4

Additional Network Management contractor Q4

Network expansion planning Q4

Implement Plan – Q1 – Q4

## **Budget**

The formal budget will be developed as part of the contracting phase, as do not know the scope of cost of administering the consortia until we receive bids, evaluate the vendors, and potential HCP participants make final commitments. We have developed the following assumptions to set a standard in preparing our final budget and determining the scope of our project. The plan to update the budget will be completed after we have received bids and finalize contracts.

Health Quest Consortium intends to generate revenue to cover 100% of the unfunded consortia costs (such as administrative costs) and 35% of HCF funded network management, equipment, and connectivity costs directly from consortia participants.

Consortia participants that connect to and utilize the Health Quest data center and its network monitoring and management systems will be responsible for a monthly connectivity fee for use of the network, network management, and equipment costs.