Kentucky’s e-Health Network
Improving healthcare quality and efficiency through health information technology adoption and exchange.

Technology Aids Smoking Cessation
Technology is beginning to play a role in smoking cessation programs with positive results.

Telemedicine Provides Specialty Healthcare
The Eastern Kentucky Mobile Health Service offers specialty care services for patients who need it by employing the use of technology.
Broadband – Laying the Foundation for Better Healthcare in Kentucky

Over the past two years, Kentucky has achieved growth rates in technology availability and adoption that lead the nation. As a reader of this newsletter, you have contributed to that success with your continued interest and involvement in Kentucky’s forward momentum.

The Prescription for Innovation calls for the entire state to be covered by high-speed Internet or broadband by the close of 2007. We are making great progress toward that lofty goal and are confident of reaching 100% coverage by year’s end. All along at ConnectKentucky, we have maintained that once the entire state has affordable access to a dependable source of broadband, there are a number of available applications that can greatly enhance the quality of life for all Kentuckians. High-tech jobs, more relevant education and more efficient local government are among the benefits of a statewide broadband deployment.

Healthcare is an obvious aspect in which the daily lives of Kentuckians can be improved with broadband. The United States is on the cutting edge of diagnostic technology development. Our hospitals are repositories of life-saving diagnostic equipment. Regardless of their sophistication, these resources remain meaningless if patients and physicians cannot access them in an affordable or convenient manner. Broadband can connect patients, physicians and sophisticated diagnostic technology in a way that is affordable, meaningful and, more importantly, does not require the patient to travel to a regional medical center at a time when basic travel is a tremendous burden.

Communication among doctors, specialists, patients and insurance companies remains healthcare’s significant challenge. For the most part, the industry is largely dependent upon yesterday’s technology: phones, faxes and postal mail. In an age when volumes of information can be contained in a tiny and inexpensive chip, most Kentucky clinicians still rely on paper files, handwritten notes, paper prescriptions and incomplete patient histories stored in file cabinets. In their defense, Kentucky clinicians have had few options otherwise.

ConnectKentucky continues to work to improve the basic technology infrastructure of the Commonwealth. The statewide broadband presence promised in the Prescription for Innovation will provide the foundation of a new way of relating among all entities of the healthcare industry. More importantly, it means your doctor will have new options while continuing to provide quality healthcare that has been enabled by today’s technology.

Although there is no silver bullet for solving these problems, there are many ways that an infusion of technology into Kentucky’s healthcare system can both improve the quality of care and reduce healthcare costs. This issue of Connected takes a look at a few of Kentucky’s recent healthcare innovators.

Mark K. McElroy
Connected Editor and Senior Vice President Operations and Communications
Kentucky’s e-Health Network

In 2005, the Kentucky General Assembly passed and Governor Ernie Fletcher signed Senate Bill 2, which authorized the establishment of a statewide e-Health network. The Kentucky e-Health Network (KEHN) Board was created in the legislation and charged with overseeing the development of a statewide, interoperable e-Health network to improve healthcare quality and efficiency through health information technology adoption and data exchange.

Kentucky’s e-Health Network Board operates under the leadership of the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville in conjunction with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. The Kentucky e-Health Network Board held its first meeting on November 7, 2005. Based on the KEHN Board’s initial assessment, the Board has undertaken several critical breakthrough projects and long-term planning necessary for the development of e-Health in Kentucky, including the following:

- Kentucky Health Information Partnership (K-HIP) is a project facilitated by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to bring together major healthcare organizations in Kentucky to develop a common web portal for provider-payor communications. The portal will contain a clinical site for accessing a patient health summary based on claims data and an administrative site for handling common administrative transactions electronically. Through this portal, healthcare providers would have secure access to clinical information on more than 60 percent of the patients they see and administrative tasks would be simplified and standardized.

- The e-Prescribing Partnerships in Kentucky (ePPIK) Grant Program is a new grant program that will assist with adoption of health information technology to advance e-Prescribing in the Commonwealth. Offered by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in partnership with the Kentucky e-Health Network Board and the Governor’s Office for Local Development, the ePPIK Grant program will promote the formation of partnerships within a community between physicians’ offices, hospitals, pharmacies and other healthcare entities to facilitate true end-to-end electronic prescription processing. A total of $300,000 in funding for the ePPIK grant program comes from the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and the Hal Rogers Grant Program that supports the Kentucky All Schedule Prescription Electronic Reporting (eKASPER), the nation’s premier program to monitor prescription drug abuse of controlled substances.

- The Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration is a federally-funded collaboration to assess how privacy and security practices and policies affect health information exchange (HIE). Kentucky is one of 33 states participating in the project. There are multiple working groups established for the project that are identifying and addressing business practice and legal barriers to HIE. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services serves as the project manager and is partnering with the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky on this project.

- The e-Health Advisory Group, a group of technical and clinical experts in e-Health, have been appointed and are charged with advising the Kentucky e-Health Network Board regarding the development of a statewide e-Health network and developing an action plan for implementing e-Health in Kentucky.

Please visit http://ehealth.ky.gov for more information.
Federal Agency Awards $4.9 Million Medicaid Transformation Grant to Kentucky - Funding will foster lower cost and higher quality healthcare

The federal Department for Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded Kentucky a $4.9 million Medicaid transformation grant to develop the Kentucky Health Information Partnership (K-HIP), which will give doctors and other clinicians secure electronic access to health information to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare.

“We need to make healthcare more affordable for Kentucky families,” said Governor Fletcher. “Healthcare is the only major industry in America still dominated by inefficient paper processes. Kentucky is at the forefront of a national movement to use technology to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of healthcare. This funding will help us make a major advance in our effort to bring lower cost, higher quality healthcare to Kentucky.”

The project will create a secure, Web-based portal that doctors and other authorized clinicians can use to access information about a patient’s medical history, including data about prescriptions, previous treatment, lab and diagnostic test results, immunizations and other basic patient information. While Medicaid will lead K-HIP, the program also involves partnerships with the private provider community, health insurance companies and non-profit groups.

The Medicaid Transformation Grant funding is for two years. At the end of the two years, Kentucky will have deployed a secure portal for providers to access health information while also laying the groundwork for a statewide e-Health Network.

The Kentucky e-Health Network Board and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) have worked together to make K-HIP possible.

“All of us spend too much time filling out forms in the doctor’s office and at the hospital when the information is often available electronically elsewhere,” said CHFS Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. “We want to ensure that health information is available when needed at the point of care but in a way that protects the privacy and confidentiality of a person’s medical information.”

HHS awarded $103 million to Kentucky and 26 other states to improve Medicaid efficiency, economy and quality of care using technology. Congress approved funding for the Medicaid transformation grants in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) to be distributed over fiscal years 2007 and 2008. States will receive the funds over the next two years. No state matching funds are required for these special grants.

Technology Aids Smoking Cessation

Smoking is an addiction that is very difficult to overcome. Research data suggest most smokers want to stop, but only one in three will succeed in quitting before age 60. It is estimated that only 2.5 percent of smokers successfully quit each year.

There is a host of smoking cessation programs available to smokers trying to quit. In today’s high-tech world, it’s not surprising that technology is beginning to play a role in some of them with positive results. Dr. Conrad Wong and Dr. Catherine Martin from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine and Dr. Jesse Dallery from the University of Florida recently conducted a five-month pilot study that used the Internet as a vital component in the process.

“Public health education on the consequences of smoking and policies such as higher taxes for cigarettes and smoking bans have been highly effective in reducing the overall smoking rates,” said Wong. “For the remaining smokers who want to quit, they might need a much more intensive approach coupled with an incentive.”

A pilot study was conducted to test an innovative intervention delivered via the Internet that provided frequent feedback and opportunity to receive monetary incentives for...
Kentucky Hosts 1st e-Health Summit

In order to assess opportunities and challenges and to formulate strategies that create e-Health projects that promote the adoption of health information technology (HIT) and health information exchange (HIE) in the Commonwealth, stakeholders from all over the state and country came together at the first annual Kentucky e-Health Summit on January 19th, 2007 in Louisville. Kentucky is in the forefront of this innovative technological field as was evident at the e-Health Summit, which was a tremendous success!

The Kentucky e-Health Summit was a unique opportunity that brought together Kentucky’s healthcare, public health, business, technology, academic and policy communities to discuss the progress, opportunities and challenges that the Commonwealth faces as these sectors work together to develop and implement e-Health in Kentucky. The Summit allowed state and community leaders involved in e-Health initiatives throughout the state to learn more about the efforts of the Kentucky e-Health Network Board and other various local health information exchange efforts. The Summit also served as a networking forum for individuals and organizations seeking to further the adoption of health information technology and exchange, and displayed the work of the Kentucky e-Health Network Board and its members. The agenda offered a number of educational sessions including an overview of state efforts led by the Kentucky e-Health Network Board and CHFS, an update on federal activities and plans, trends in health IT nationwide and information on various regional and community exchange efforts around Kentucky. The Kentucky e-Health Summit also held regional roundtables for individuals and organizations to develop contacts with others in their areas interested in e-Health.

The Kentucky e-Health Summit, meant to provide a clearer understanding of the statewide efforts and strategies underway related to e-Health, sought to introduce regional and community e-Health efforts and establish a larger network of contacts in the e-Health world.

For more information about the program Dr. Conrad Wong can be contacted via phone at (859) 323-6774 or e-mail: conrad.wong@uky.edu.
Telemedicine Provides Specialty Healthcare

Many Americans living in rural regions are without specialty healthcare for a variety of reasons. The Eastern Kentucky Mobile Health Service has provided a solution to this problem, offering specialty care services for patients who need it, by employing the use of telemedicine. Telemedicine is an innovative approach to healthcare which uses electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support long-distance clinical healthcare, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration.

Implemented in May 2003, the mobile unit is funded by the state in cooperation with St. Joseph HealthCare in Lexington. Dr. Joseph Richardson serves as Medical Director, and the unit is staffed with an advanced registered nurse practitioner, a registered nurse, a social worker and a driver trained in clerical needs and first aid. The staff works together to bring healthcare to Morgan, Lawrence and Wolfe County residents. Rose Rexroat, R.N., M.S.N., Manager for Community Services, said that last year they treated 2,032 people equating to 2,528 visits.

Designed to offer primary care services, telemedicine comes into play for those patients unable or without the means to travel to specialty service providers. “Access and transportation are huge issues for people,” said Rexroat. “We wanted to provide services that assist in overcoming both of these barriers.”

The Kentucky Telecare Network, comprised of healthcare providers across the state, is the network by which the Eastern Kentucky mobile unit operates. Their hub manager is Saint Claire Regional Medical Center. The unit is equipped with computers in each exam room that are connected to this network, and T1 lines in weather-proof boxes provide them with high-speed Internet connection at each service location. The connection to the Network not only allows the Mobile Health Service to access care and services for their patients but it allows any agency or organization on the Kentucky Telecare Network to access the Eastern Kentucky Mobile Health Service for information or referral for those they serve or have need for primary care.

“Each of the examination rooms has their own computer, and we transmit all information electronically,” said Rexroat. The electronic medical record and other data for their patients are stored remotely at St. Joseph. “We don’t store any data on the mobile.”

“If we have a patient going for a procedure at St. Claire Regional Medical Center, we can videoconference with their doctors about preparations that may be needed beforehand,” said Rexroat. “Whatever procedure or test is prescribed, we try to do as much of the preparation or testing locally so the trip for the actual procedure will be the only one necessary.”

For more information about the Eastern Kentucky Mobile Health Service, contact Rose Rexroat at (859) 313-1109 or by e-mail at rrexroat@sjhlex.org.
Governor Fletcher Recognizes Technology Innovators And Releases The 2007 ConnectKentucky Progress Report During Annual “Tech Day In Kentucky”

**Tech Day in Kentucky** was held on March 1, 2007 in recognition of Kentucky’s technology progress. As part of Tech Day in Kentucky, the Governor presented the 2007 Governor’s Technology Awards and released ConnectKentucky’s 2007 Progress Report.

“Today, we recognize forward thinkers in the Commonwealth who embrace, promote and advance technology in their businesses and their communities,” Governor Fletcher said. “It is an honor to recognize these Kentuckians for how they use technology. They are vivid examples of the successes brought about by the work of ConnectKentucky.”

The 2007 Governor’s Technology Award recipients are:

**Corporate Citizen** – TMMK, based in Georgetown

**New Kentucky Business** – Geek Squad City, based in Brooks

**Small Business** – Uncle Lee’s and Wings Supply, based in Greenville

**Individual** – Patricia Miron, Director of Joint Sales and Marketing, Intel Corporation

**Student** – Elizabeth Scoville, senior at the University of Kentucky

The 2007 ConnectKentucky Progress Report, highlights the nationally recognized achievements of Kentucky’s **Prescription for Innovation**. Governor Fletcher launched the Prescription for Innovation in late 2004 as a statewide initiative to accelerate technology literacy and use across all sectors of Kentucky’s economy and to make access to high-speed Internet, or broadband, available to all Kentuckians by the end of 2007.

**Highlights of ConnectKentucky’s 2007 Progress Report:**

- Since the launch of Prescription for Innovation, the availability of broadband across Kentucky has increased more than 50 percent. In 2003, about 60 percent of Kentucky households had the ability to subscribe to broadband. Over the last three years, coverage has grown to 92 percent, an addition of more than 500,000 previously unserved rural homes.

- Use of broadband has increased dramatically over the past two years, with gains of 46 percent for homes using high-speed Internet and 30 percent more business use.

- Through the No Child Left Offline program, ConnectKentucky and its partners have delivered nearly 2,000 computers and printers to the homes of middle school students who previously did not own a computer.
$667 million + Private capital invested in Kentucky telecommunications (unprecedented)

23 million+ Positive media impressions related to Kentucky's Prescription for Innovation

504,000 Approximate number of new households that have received broadband access since the start of Governor Fletcher’s plan (on track to have 100% coverage by end of 2007)

2,000 Approximate number of home computers delivered to underprivileged households by No Child Left Offline with the recent AEP Foundation donation

120 Number of Kentucky counties actively engaged in the eCommunity Leadership Team process (assessing needs, building interest, planning)

73% Growth rate of broadband adoption in Kentucky over last two years

53% Growth rate of broadband availability in Kentucky over last two years

20% Growth rate of home computer ownership in Kentucky over last two years

#1 Kentucky’s national ranking for expanding broadband

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eCommunity Strategies
ConnectKentucky’s Project Based Business Division

All 120 counties in Kentucky have an established eCommunity Leadership team and each team has prepared its own Strategic Technology Plan.

Now that Kentucky’s communities are ready to act on their plans, ConnectKentucky’s eCommunity Strategies is available to assist in this important implementation process as outlined in each county’s plan.

eCommunity Strategies provides technology consulting to communities across the Commonwealth through ConnectKentucky’s well known team of technology experts.

For more information on how eCommunity Strategies can assist in your technology planning needs, please visit our website at www.connectkentucky.org or contact Ernie Wood at (270) 799-0875 or by email at ewood@connectky.org.