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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Carolina Telehealth Network (NCTN) receives Public Leadership Award with Broadband Project Directed by Cabarrus Health Alliance

The North Carolina Telehealth Network (NCTN) was the recipient of the Public Leadership Award during the 21 Awards Gala on Nov. 10 hosted by the North Carolina Technology Association in Durham.

The NCTN, through a three-year \$7.2 million contract with MCNC, provides broadband services that link health programs and sites across the state. The sites include clinics, community health centers, public health agencies, and non-profit hospitals.

NCTN connectivity provides these institutions with the network infrastructure required to utilize a diverse set of telehealth and healthcare information applications. As healthcare begins to depend more on Health Information Exchanges (HIEs), Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) and Internet-enabled research for the next great cures, the NCTN will serve the high-bandwidth, low-latency network needs of health practitioners and researchers throughout North Carolina.

"The NCTA Public Leadership Award is geared toward people and organizations that have made significant advances in the well-being of North Carolinians through the effective use of technology," commented Brooks Raiford, president and CEO of the North Carolina Technology Association. "The NCTN is a great example of how the right partners can bring meaningful improvement to people's lives and serve as a model for similar initiatives across the country."

To date, 54 public health sites have been connected to the network. An additional four public health sites and 24 non-profit hospitals have subscribed to the project and are in the process of being connected. Nearly 20 additional non-profit hospitals will be on board during the next phase.

The NCTN project is being directed by the Cabarrus Health Alliance in Kannapolis. Cabarrus Health Alliance wrote the grant for this project when it was proposed in 2007 and has provided administrative services for the project. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded a three-year, \$6 million grant to the Cabarrus Health Alliance in 2007, on behalf of the Southern Piedmont and the Northeastern North Carolina Partnerships for Public Health and the North Carolina Association of Free Clinics. Three other N.C. awardees, Albemarle Regional Health System, University Health Services and Western Carolina University, later merged their pilot program awards of \$6.1 million to help fund phase two for North Carolina hospitals. "We are pleased to see how this network has come alive, and how it has helped many health care providers meet the new challenges in using information systems to support health and care, especially non-profit and rural providers," said Dr. William F. Pilkington, CHA Director.

The next NCTN phase will focus on improving broadband facilities at low cost for North Carolina hospitals using part of the FCC award – which is expected to be operational soon.

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