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**EXPANSION OF GREATER HOUSTON HEALTHCONNECT WILL ENHANCE
COORDINATION OF CARE BETWEEN PATIENTS, PROVIDERS**

Organization joins with two surrounding health information exchanges, covers 20-county region

March 5, 2012 (HOUSTON) – Greater Houston Healthconnect today announced mergers with two surrounding area health information exchanges in an effort to foster healthier communities. The Galveston County Health Information Exchange and the Health Information Exchange of Southeast Texas have joined forces with Healthconnect to provide easier access to a more complete view of a patient’s medical information. Representatives from both systems have been appointed to Healthconnect’s board of directors and will continue to actively represent their geographic areas as Healthconnect becomes operational.

Recognizing the significant overlap in service area and the obvious advantage of sharing resources, the Galveston organization joined the Houston area group last year. The Galveston exchange, which encompassed two hospitals and 752 physicians, considered its options and decided that the community would best benefit from the leveraged resources available through collaboration between regional groups.

Dr. Ben Raimer, senior vice president for Health Policy & Legislative Affairs for the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, commented on the decision: “As a natural extension of UTMB's affiliation with the Texas Medical Center, we are pleased to be a part of Healthconnect’s efforts to optimize patient and health care system access to important medical information. UTMB Health's Community Health Program is working with community partners to assure access to patient records to improve health care delivery. With support from the Houston Endowment, these systems will assure that patients seen in a variety of community health settings will be able to navigate health systems regionally. These efforts assure patient access and optimal care.”

The Southeast Texas system is the most recent regional information group to join Healthconnect and includes a service area with 16 hospitals and 650 physicians in Jasper, Jefferson, Hardin, Newton, Orange and Tyler Counties. Dr. Mark Toups, an internal medicine physician who has practiced in Beaumont for 30 years explained, “Greater Houston Healthconnect has made significant strides in a short period of time and is now ready to implement a software solution. It made sense for us to join forces with Healthconnect and



leverage our resources to enable a higher level of functionality for the Beaumont–Port Arthur area. Joining with Healthconnect will allow us to do more for our patients. We’ll also be looking for ways to help physicians to enhance their practices and streamline referral processes.”

Dr. James Langabeer, president and CEO of Healthconnect, sees collaboration as a key element in Healthconnect’s success and ultimate value to the community. “By combining the resources of the three HIEs, our larger coverage will afford thousands of patients enhanced coordination of healthcare across their providers,” Langabeer said. “For instance, if someone from Houston visits an emergency department in Beaumont, pertinent information about their health history and medications is more likely to be readily available in a timely manner. This enhances the quality and efficiency of care for that patient.”

Healthconnect now covers a 20-county region with a total of 133 hospitals, more than 14,000 physicians and a population of nearly 7 million people. Healthconnect represents the largest HIE market area in Texas.

About Greater Houston Healthconnect

Greater Houston Healthconnect is an independent, community-based organization responsible for enabling information exchange among healthcare providers in the Greater Houston area, which encompasses a 20-county region. It is tasked with mobilizing healthcare information electronically across organizations to enhance the safety, quality, and efficiency of care and improve information access throughout the region. Key stakeholders include healthcare providers, payers, employers and the community as a whole. For more information, visit <http://www.ghhconnect.org/>.

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