

### Rio One Health Network Project Description

**Project Description:** Rio One Health Network is a Texas non-profit corporation specifically incorporated to participate in the planning and subsequent implementation of a permanent health information exchange in Hidalgo and Starr Counties that meets or exceeds state and federal standards. The goal of this organization is to develop a compliant, secure health network that accurately reflects local standards through a representative board of directors. Using current Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology, the ARRA funds provided through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to Rio One Health have facilitated the development of a health information exchange focused on improved patient care through shared information, while reducing duplication of services and therefore potentially reducing healthcare costs.

**Patient Focus:** When fully implemented this exchange will permit the timely exchange of patient information between all network participating physicians, hospitals, pharmacies and laboratories in this region. Rio One Network intends to demonstrate that high quality patient centric health care can be provided at less cost when healthcare entities share required patient information and reduce duplication of services. Special emphasis will be placed on the patient being an active participant in the treatment process, in prevention strategies, and in promoting wellness and necessary life style changes for themselves and their families that help to improve their quality of life. Patients have the right to opt-out of any health exchange by signing the required form for that purpose with their provider.

**Health Information:** Through the timely exchange of secure health information through the Rio One Health network, participating physicians have more access to vital information required to diagnose and treat a patient and can update that information at each visit to maintain an accurate and secure patient record available to other network providers and hospitals when necessary. This approach has the potential to reduce the cost of duplicative services, reduce error rates, reduce costly re-admission rates and promote more continuity of care for patients in this region, while establishing more cooperative cost reduction measures by local providers, pharmacies and laboratories.

**Grant for Non-Profit Clinics:** Rio One Health Network has now secured a grant through Methodist Healthcare Ministries to extend the network connectivity to the County Indigent Care Program Clinics, Hope Clinic, the El Milagro Clinic and one federally qualified health clinic here. This network participation requirement is governed by standard regulations and agreements to insure, 1.) that network participants understand and agree to comply with all state and federal regulation required when joining a health network; and 2.) that network participants agree to comply with the privacy and patient protections required by law of all health exchanges when joining a health network.

**Agreements Required:** The required documents for network participation include the *Participation Agreement* and the *Data Use and Reciprocal Support Agreement (DURSA)* which defines the standard rules required of all physicians, hospitals and participating non-profit organizations that need to be complied with to actively participate in any health information network. We are requesting the approval of these two agreements by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court in order to proceed with connecting the County Indigent Care Program clinics to the Rio One Health Network.