



## **Massachusetts Behavioral Health Providers to Receive Nearly \$1 Million to Advance Health IT Capabilities**

*Technology Investments Aim to Improve Patient Care and Reduce Cost;  
Second Round Launched to Engage Additional Providers Statewide*

WESTBOROUGH, MA – April 9, 2015 – MeHI, the Massachusetts eHealth Institute at MassTech, has announced the first round of grantees from the eQuality Incentive Program (eQIP) for behavioral health providers located across the Commonwealth. MeHI has awarded grants to 18 non-profits across the Commonwealth, which will total nearly \$1 million if the awardees reach each of the program milestones. The funds will help these Massachusetts practices invest in innovative health information technologies, or health IT, to improve patient care and reduce healthcare costs, while ensuring appropriate privacy and security of behavioral health patient data.

The 18 Massachusetts behavioral healthcare organizations provide direct care to patients managing mental health or substance abuse issues. These organizations serve many of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable individuals, many of whom receive costly services from multiple providers across the care spectrum. By using health IT, such as electronic health records and health information exchange, behavioral health providers can better communicate with other providers treating these individuals, providing improved care management.

“The behavioral health organizations the Commonwealth is investing in with this grant program have chosen to lead the way in using technology to help provide integrated, high quality care to some of our most vulnerable residents,” stated Laurance Stuntz, Director of MeHI. “We are excited to support these organizations and their communities through this grant program, learn from them and help develop best practices that can be applied to help behavioral health providers across the Commonwealth.”

The selected behavioral health provider organizations will receive payments upon reaching select milestones that demonstrate increasingly advanced use of health IT systems, totaling up to \$973,500 to the 18 providers. Amounts each organization receives will vary depending on the size of the organization and their attainment of key milestones, with individual milestones ranging from \$8,250 for small organizations to \$20,625 for larger organizations, and maximum awards for each organization ranging from \$33,000 to \$82,500.

In the Metro Boston region, the following organizations received eQIP grants:

Organization	City	Total Award
Home for Little Wanderers	Boston	\$66,000
MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)	Boston	\$49,500
Riverside Community Care, Inc.	Dedham	\$82,500
South Shore Mental Health Center, Inc.	Quincy	\$66,000
The Edinburg Center	Lexington	\$49,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$313,500</b>

“Many of the children we work with at The Home have significant and complex behavioral healthcare needs. The eHealth eQuality Incentive Program grant will help us to further develop The Home’s Electronic Health Record, allowing for better tracking of services delivered and progress made. By enabling electronic messaging, patient portal and information exchange capabilities, our staff will facilitate more efficient, effective, and secure client care,” said Michael Pearis, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, The Home for Little Wanderers.

“We are grateful for MeHI’s grant to help MSPCC make an important investment in electronic health records,” said Mary McGeown, President and Chief Executive Officer of MSPCC. “We know it will benefit patients to have health information accessible to multiple providers.”

“South Shore Mental Health is excited to partner with MeHI to provide enhanced integrated care for our clients,” stated Stephen Wojcik, Executive Vice President at South Shore Mental Health. “Throughout the South Shore and Southeast Massachusetts, we provide services for many individuals, families and children with complex medical and behavioral health needs. As a member of a client’s care team, we are committed to strengthening interoperability through utilization of the Massachusetts Health Information Highway and our certified health record. The support of the eQuality Incentive Program will provide resources and expertise to achieve these objectives.”

“The Edinburg Center is very pleased to receive this MeHI grant because it will facilitate a more rapid implementation of our Electronic Health Record while meeting our objective of improving the quality of client care in the most cost-effective manner,” comments Bill Riley, IT Director, The Edinburg Center.

According to the [Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology](#), with the “expansion of the Affordable Care Act in 2014, it is estimated that one in six of the newly eligible Medicaid population will present indicators of behavioral health disorders,” which highlights the need for increased communication between behavioral health providers and other healthcare

organizations. According to [MeHI's 2014 survey](#) of Massachusetts providers, behavioral healthcare providers lag significantly behind other sectors in the adoption of health information technology, with an EHR adoption rate of approximately 55%.

“We are dedicated to ensuring the state’s most vulnerable residents receive the quality of care they deserve,” said the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Marylou Sudders. “This funding allows healthcare organizations to upgrade health information technology systems that are central to increasing patient access to appropriate behavioral health treatment in a timely and efficient manner.”

MeHI has also recently released the second round of eQIP grants for the behavioral health sector. In this new funding round, MeHI has expanded the eligibility criteria to engage smaller practices and to include ‘for-profit’ organizations. For a downloadable PDF version of the request for proposals, visit the MeHI procurement site at <http://mehi.masstech.org/funding/apply-grant-funding>.

The eQIP grants are funded via key investments made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through [Chapter 224, the 2012 healthcare cost containment law](#).

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**About the Massachusetts eHealth Institute:**

MeHI, or the Massachusetts eHealth Institute at the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, is the state's entity for healthcare innovation, technology, and competitiveness and is responsible for advancing the dissemination of health information technology throughout Massachusetts, including the deployment of electronic health records systems in healthcare provider settings and connecting them through the Mass Hlway, the statewide health information exchange. For more information, please visit <http://mehi.masstech.org> and follow @MassEHealth.