



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2008

Planning Must Start in 2008 to Meet Deadlines for HIPAA Upgrades

NCHICA-WEDI Timeline Assumes 2008 Start to Assure Timely Completion; Audiocast and Meetings Planned to Improve Process

Reston, VA and Research Triangle Park, NC (January 31, 2008) -- All organizations impacted by HIPAA transaction requirements – health plans, providers, and vendors – must begin planning this year to upgrade their transactions to the latest X12 and NCPDP versions in anticipation of the expected mandate. The NCHICA-WEDI timeline, which forecasts a 2014 completion date, was based upon status quo processes that are not acceptable. The 2014 target date assumes that entities will begin their project planning and budgeting process in 2008. This is critical to moving the industry forward toward the upgraded and improved transaction requirements that the industry has requested.

“While we received many positive comments in support of the timeline, some initial reactions indicated that the projected 2014 completion date would allow organizations to delay their initial planning efforts for the 5010 implementation,” said Jim Schuping, Executive Vice President and CEO of WEDI. “This was not the intended message. Our 2014 ‘final’ completion date requires that all involved entities begin their efforts in 2008, as the timeline indicates.”

It is important to understand that the draft proposed timeline is the result of specific assumptions and is somewhat fluid in nature. The assumptions are based upon the industry’s experience in the past with regulatory processes and timeframes. The timeline can be shortened or lengthened depending on how the industry reacts and how effective those involved can be collectively in improving the overall process. By delaying initial planning, it may be difficult for some entities to meet the expected deadlines for compliance. It is critical that the industry work together and move at the same pace so that appropriate testing and implementation steps can be completed.

Holt Anderson, Executive Director of NCHICA, reiterated this message. “We are urging the industry to get started now and work together on improving the implementation process to shorten the initial timeline estimates for full implementation.”

WEDI is planning education and information dissemination initiatives to involve the health care industry in the improvement process. An audiocast is scheduled for February 14 to provide further clarification and details on the timeline and initial assumptions. On March 4, an informational forum is scheduled in Northern Virginia to identify the critical processes which must be shortened to improve the timeline and begin coordinated efforts to make those changes. The audiocast and forum are open to all interested participants. Further details on these events can be found at <http://www.wedi.org>.

WEDI and NCHICA have partnered on the timeline project to present the industry with an overview of anticipated health IT regulations and projects and specific timelines for addressing them. It is an attempt to educate industry participants and policymakers on the broad scope of activities required, expected timing and resource issues, dependencies, conflicts, and results.

Please contact Jim Schuping at jschuping@wedi.org with questions. Additional information on the NCHICA-WEDI timeline effort can be accessed at www.nchica.org and www.wedi.org.

About NCHICA

The North Carolina Healthcare Information and Communications Alliance, Inc. (NCHICA) is a nationally recognized nonprofit consortium that serves as an open, effective and neutral forum for health information technology (HIT) initiatives that improve health and care in North Carolina. Members include leading organizations in healthcare, research and information technology. Working closely with its members, NCHICA has the unique ability to convene and form partnerships to advance HIT adoption. NCHICA's leadership in conducting demonstration projects, hosting educational sessions and fostering collective efforts within North Carolina helps position the state at the vanguard of national HIT acceleration efforts. NCHICA is located in Research Triangle Park, NC. For more information, please call (919) 558-9258 or visit www.nchica.org.

About WEDI

The Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI) is a national, broad-based healthcare industry trade association committed to the implementation of administrative simplification in healthcare through electronic commerce and EDI, and actively seeks opportunities for "partnering with other organizations to achieve electronic delivery of information in healthcare." WEDI is headquartered in Reston, Virginia, near Washington, DC. Inquiries for additional information may be directed to Jim Schuping, 703-391-2716, jschuping@wedi.org.

Media Contacts:

For NCHICA:

Alyssa Willard
Zarb Consulting
Alyssa@zarbconsulting.com
(919) 791-0012

For WEDI:

Jim Schuping, EVP/CEO
jschuping@wedi.org
(703) 391-2716

###