



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NCHICA and WEDI Announce Collaboration to Provide Regulatory Resource for Healthcare**

**Research Triangle Park, NC (September 12, 2007)** -- The North Carolina Healthcare Information and Communications Alliance, Inc. (NCHICA), a nonprofit consortium that aims to improve health and care in North Carolina through health information technology (HIT) initiatives, today announced its collaboration with the Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI) to maintain an electronic timeline that organizes proposed healthcare standards, regulations and technology solutions announced by federal agencies and national standards organizations.

"The timeline will be a valuable tool for providers," said Betsy Clore, Analyst Programmer for Wake Forest University Physicians Information Systems and Co-Chair of NCHICA's "Timeline Task Force," part of the Transactions, Codes and Identifiers Workgroup. "Because margins are low and IT staff and time are limited, any unbudgeted change has a severe impact on the practice's ability to provide medical services. A concise reference of HIT initiatives and their projected implementation periods will help provider organizations make realistic plans for both internally- and externally-driven projects."

Guy Ferrari, PMP, Project Manager, Electronic Solutions, for Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina and Co-Chair of the Task Force, added, "The timeline was envisioned to be a tool to help planners within different companies become aware of what initiatives may affect them, when those initiatives may affect them and some order of magnitude of the effort involved. This helps companies make the best use of their scarce resources."

In March 2005, the Task Force initiated the timeline to inform NCHICA members about upcoming deadlines and their potential impact and dependencies on other projects. The result has been a tangible critical path schedule with assumptions that enable organizations to supplement and inform their internal implementation plans. Both NCHICA and WEDI will now be able to draw on the support and expertise of their members to provide a more complete, robust resource.

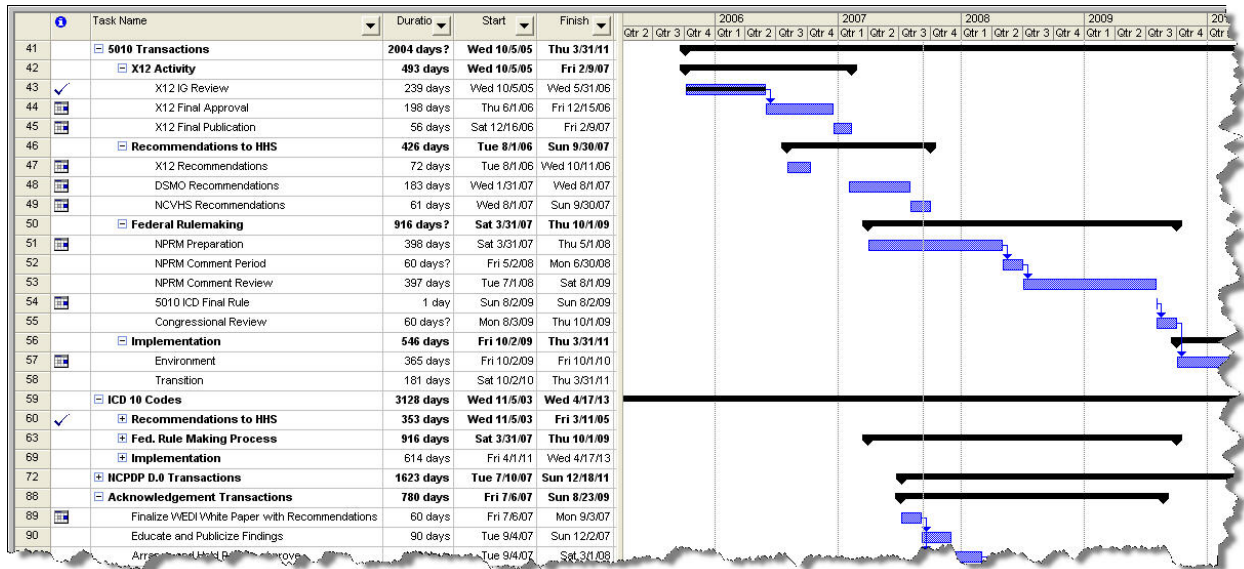
"NCHICA is very proud of the Task Force's leadership in developing a methodology to categorize and display multiple federal regulatory initiatives in a manner that highlights potential implementation issues," said Holt Anderson, Executive Director of NCHICA. "Partnering with WEDI was the next logical step to move the project forward and elevate it to a level that will be of national benefit."

Comprised of members from all sectors of the HIT industry, WEDI provides guidance on how to best leverage the industry's collective knowledge and resources to improve healthcare quality, affordability and availability. WEDI members actively participate in numerous regulatory activities and groups, and the organization tracks industry changes in consumer-directed health plans, electronic health records (EHRs) and personal health records (PHRs). These three areas are also being tracked in the overall timeline, with clear dates and dependencies.

Stanley Nachimson, principal of Nachimson Advisors, LLC, is consulting for WEDI on the timeline project. He commented, "This effort will enable all parts of the industry to recognize how the many HIT efforts are interrelated, and how they can best implement the initiatives that are important to them. This will also enable policy makers to understand how changes in the schedule of one initiative will impact the others. In the past, these interrelationships have not been well understood."

“Facilitating effective and efficient information exchange and management is the cornerstone of WEDI,” said Jim Schuping, CEO and Executive Vice President of WEDI. “Our collaboration with NCHICA is a natural extension of this commitment. Combining the knowledge and experience of our two organizations will enable us to deliver a comprehensive and truly useful resource the industry can rely on.”

The timeline database will be available for download on both the NCHICA and WEDI websites in the near future. The timeline can be viewed in various formats, including the one shown below:



Both organizations are currently seeking sponsorship and support commitments for the project, which will help determine how often updates can be published. Those interested in participating in or sponsoring the effort should contact Holt Anderson at [holt@nchica.org](mailto:holt@nchica.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](http://www.NCHICA.org).

### About WEDI

The Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange (WEDI) is a broad-based industry coalition “partnering for electronic delivery of information in healthcare.” WEDI is headquartered in Reston, Virginia, near Washington, DC. Inquiries for additional information may be directed to WEDI, c/o Jim Schuping, Executive Vice President/CEO, 12020 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 100, Reston, VA 20191. Phone: 703-391-2716; e-mail: [juschuping@wedi.org](mailto:juschuping@wedi.org).

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