

August 18, 2010 - Topic: Health IT

California Builds Unprecedented Broadband Telehealth Network

On Tuesday, California launched the California Telehealth Network, the nation's largest telemedicine network, to connect patients and physicians using broadband technology, the *Sacramento Bee* reports.

By 2011, CTN is expected to link almost 900 health care facilities across the state. Currently, it is set up across 50 sites. UC-Davis Medical Center serves as the network's control center (Calvan, *Sacramento Bee*, 8/18).

Network Capabilities

CTN visually links small hospitals and health clinics with a system of physicians, surgeons and specialists as far as hundreds of miles away.

The connection will allow health care professionals to:

- Check on patients in real time;
- Review X-rays and diagnostic tests; and
- Advise on procedures, prescription drugs and emergency treatment.

Officials said that using broadband will reduce medical costs and improve clinical outcomes overall (Ross, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/18).

Background

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) said Proposition 1D from 2006 and the state's Broadband Taskforce helped pave the way for the new network. The proposition provided \$200 million to build the state's telemedicine capacity.

With those funds, UC-Davis has started construction on a 52,000 square-foot facility to provide telehealth education to medical students.

Financing the Network

Funding for the network, which cost \$30 million, includes:

- More than \$21 million from the Federal Communications Commission;
- A matching funds grant of \$3.6 million from the California Emerging Technology Fund; and
- Support from the California HealthCare Foundation (Rauber, *Sacramento Business Journal*, 8/17).

CHCF publishes *California Healthline*.

Governor Weighs In

On Tuesday, Schwarzenegger was joined by U.S. Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra to launch the network.

Schwarzenegger said, "What we are launching today is a new era for health care. Through a simple broadband link, this state-of-the-art system will save lives by instantly connecting people from across the state, including underserved and rural areas" (*Office of the Governor release*, 8/17).

To read more about the launch of CTN, see [today's Capitol Desk post](#).

Broadcast Coverage

On Tuesday, Capitol Public Radio's "*KXJZ News*" reported on the launch of California's new telehealth

network (Lieszkovszky, "KXJZ News," Capitol Public Radio, 8/17).

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