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UNH Joins Maine, Vt. Partners To Launch Regional Health Care Reform Network

January 26, 2012

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire’s New Hampshire Institute for Health Policy and Practice (NHIHPP), in partnership with health care reform organizations in Maine and Vermont, has received a grant from the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust Fund at The Boston Foundation to support a regional network to provide help with health care reform efforts. The two-year grant, at \$70,000 per year, will launch the Northern New England Network for the Promotion of Healthcare Access and Reform, a collaboration of the New Hampshire Citizens Health Initiative, Maine Health Management Coalition, and Blueprint for Health in Vermont.

“This new network will bring together key organizations working to bring about health care system transformation in Northern New England to take advantage of our separate statewide efforts and work more closely together to achieve greater regional impact and efficiency,” says NHIHPP Director Ned Helms, who is principal investigator on this new network. “This project will tap our shared experience to significantly improve access to a more effective and efficient system of care in our region.”

“The Cox Trust is pleased to be able to contribute to a collaborative effort that will prepare the region for expanded health care access as the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented by 2014,” says Amy Segal Shorey, one of the trust’s program officers. The Cox Trust is a New Englandwide funder whose health priority is access for all New Englanders to high-quality and cost-effective care.

The three similar organizations have been “comparing notes” and sharing resources for several years, Helms says. For instance, New Hampshire developed the Web-based N. H. HealthCost, which lets consumers compare health care costs from a variety of providers, which was replicated in Maine. New Hampshire, in turn, borrowed Maine’s hospital quality report card. “Having the resources to do this in a more consistent, formalized way is going to be really helpful,” Helms says.

“Vermont is looking forward to working with New Hampshire and Maine as part of a multi-state Learning Health System. These three states are uniquely positioned to use comparative evaluation to guide ongoing reforms, and to make sure that patients have the highest quality and highest value healthcare,” says Craig Jones, M.D., director of Blueprint for Health.

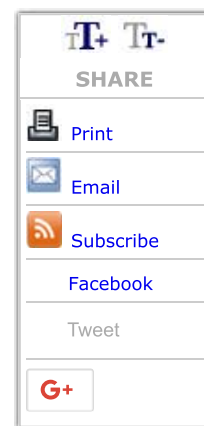
“We are pleased to be able to start building the collaborative infrastructure across our states to promote better quality healthcare at lower costs,” says Elizabeth Mitchell, chief executive officer of Maine Health Management Coalition. “These organizations are aligned in their mission and will be able to build on each other’s success to accelerate change.”

The Northern New England Network for the Promotion of Healthcare Access and Reform will target four primary audiences: health care practitioners, businesses purchasing health insurance, people who use the health care system, and policymakers.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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