

QSource Awarded State ePrescribing Contract

QSource, a healthcare quality consulting firm and the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Tennessee, has been awarded a contract by the State of Tennessee to oversee ePrescribing implementation in physician practices.

Gov. Phil Bredesen and the Tennessee General Assembly have authorized several initiatives to assist healthcare providers in Tennessee implement new technologies that enhance the quality of care available to residents. QSource will administer the Physician Connectivity Grant, which will cover the start-up costs of implementing ePrescribing technology.

The State will reimburse actual costs not to exceed \$3,500 per Tennessee licensed physician and actual costs not to exceed \$6,000 per treatment site to develop the infrastructure to connect to the Tennessee eHealth Exchange Zone and to use ePrescribing technology. Funds are intended to cover expenses related to the first year of broadband service. All grantees are expected to participate in ePrescribing for two years.

To be eligible for the grant, physicians must be a licensed in Tennessee, actively practicing and in good standing with the licensure board. Medical treatment sites in rural counties and primary care will be given grant priority. The following types of practices have also been designated for priority disbursement: Family Practice, General Practice, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Public Health and General Preventative Medicine, Eligible physicians should visit www.qsource.org and select "ePrescribing Grant Application" to begin the process.

Vanderbilt-Ingram Researchers Find Clue to Cancer Drug Allergies

Cancer patients from the Southeastern United States who are treated with the drug cetuximab, known commercially as Erbitux, are far more likely to suffer severe allergic reactions than patients in other regions of the country. Now researchers from Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center have discovered an underlying clue to this mystery. It appears many of those patients already have a pre-existing antibody that reacts with the cancer drug, causing severe allergic reaction. Dr. Christine Chung, assistant professor of Medicine and Cancer Biology, is the lead author of the study published in the March 13 issue of *the New England Journal of Medicine*.

Cetuximab is a monoclonal antibody approved for use in colon cancer and squamous-cell head and neck cancer. Chung became curious about the

drug when several Vanderbilt-Ingram patients had severe allergic reactions shortly after being infused with the substance. "When I saw my patients having these allergic reactions they looked very much like the anaphylactic reaction in its acuity and symptom presentation as you see with something like severe peanut allergy," said Chung.

Joining forces with other researchers, the group pooled serum samples from cancer patients, as well as control subjects. Then they tested the samples for the IgE antibody. The geographic differences were striking. The antibodies were found in 20.8 percent of samples from control subjects in Tennessee, 6.1 percent of samples from Northern California and 0.6 percent from Boston. The researchers also had to determine what the antibodies were binding to in the drug. After ruling out several options, they found the smoking gun — sugar molecules that are added to the protein during the process of making the drug in a cell line.

However, another mystery still remains. What is the triggering antigen that Southerners are exposed to that causes this allergic reaction? "I have a hunch that it might be an infectious organism, perhaps something that is more common in warm, humid weather," Chung mused. The scientists already have a list of possible culprits, including histoplasmosis, amoebas or other parasitic infections.

Baptist Hospital Begins New Inpatient Care Management Programs

Baptist Hospital has restructured its current hospitalist program and added obstetrics hospitalist and intensivist programs to its care spectrum.

"Inpatient care delivery is escalating in its complexity," said Dr. William C. Thompson, chief medical officer at Baptist Hospital. "To help meet the increasingly complicated needs of the patients who are admitted to the hospital, evidence is mounting nationwide that inpatient care programs can help optimize quality, allow resources to be better utilized and improve patient outcomes."

Currently, 10 hospitalists provide 24-hour, on-site coverage — arranging patients' care from admission to discharge. Previously, several pulmonologists had served as hospitalists at Baptist. Now, internal medicine physicians employed by the hospital staff the program. Baptist Hospital has also launched an Obstetrics Hospitalist Program to provide in-house coverage for obstetric emergencies around the clock and daytime coverage for laboring patients when requested by a patient's obstetrician. The OB Hospitalists will

also be responsible for unassigned patients who do not have a physician and present to Baptist Hospital with obstetric complaints. The Baptist Intensivist Program is a new program staffed by pulmonologists who have contracted with the hospital to provide services for critical care patients. The intensivists are on site 12 hours per day, seven days a week and on call at night.

Passport and DSI Partner on Technologies

Through an agreement with Database Solutions, Inc. (DSI), Franklin-based Passport Health Communications, Inc. will give its more than 4,000 hospital, physician practice and other healthcare provider clients access to DSI's AccuReg® registration quality improvement technology. The partnership also allows DSI to expand its breadth of offerings to providers to include Passport's patient insurance eligibility verification, medical necessity compliance, financial products and other services.

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Shared Health Partners With State of Tennessee to Provide Electronic Health Information

Shared Health, Inc., provider of secure health information technology solutions, has partnered with the state of Tennessee to provide its electronic health record solutions and ePrescribe to the new statewide health information network called the Tennessee Information Network or TNII (<http://www.TNII.net/ehealth>). Shared Health's partnership with the state began with its offering of the electronic health record for all TennCare beneficiaries. That partnership has now expanded to include collaboration with the TNII initiative.

As the first content providers for TNII, Shared Health and the Tennessee Department of Health will enable doctors to access patient medical histories, immunizations, and even prescribe medications electronically through the secure broadband connectivity. Analysis by the state concluded that many physicians did not have broadband connectivity to facilitate the movement of large images and telemedicine applications. TNII's intent is to offer all providers with appropriate and secure broadband connectivity.

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Awards, Honors, Recognitions

Easter Seals TN recently announced the selection of **Monroe Carell, Jr.** as the 2008 Nashvillian of the Year. Carell, who founded Central Parking and for whom Vanderbilt Children's Hospital is named, will be honored at the 15th annual celebration on May 20th. He is a well-known philanthropist who has given time, money and energy to support education, healthcare and the arts.



Monroe Carell, Jr.

Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center has been selected as a "Blue Distinction Center for Complex and Rare CancersSM" by Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, in collaboration with BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee. To be honored with the distinction, cancer centers must offer comprehensive inpatient cancer care programs for adults, delivered by multidisciplinary teams with subspecialty training and distinguished clinical expertise in treating complex and rare types of cancer. "BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee is committed to identifying the highest medical value possible for our members," said Dr. Ken Patric, vice president and chief medical officer

for BCBST. "That process begins by identifying the highest quality providers. Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center was the only provider in Tennessee to meet all of the quality criteria for rare adult cancers necessary to be a Blue Distinction Center."

Michael Butler, division director of business operations for surgical services at Baptist Hospital, recently became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, the nation's leading professional society for healthcare leaders. Fellow status represents achievement of the highest standard of professional development. Only 7,500 healthcare executives hold this distinction.



Michael Butler

Recently, the nation's leading autism advocacy organization announced funding **Vanderbilt University Medical Center** to become one of the new Autism Treatment Network (ATN) sites — an elite designation in the field of autism treatment and research. Autism Speaks approved \$450,000 over three years for Vanderbilt as part of its expansion from five sites to 15 across

the United States and Canada. "Being part of the national Autism Treatment Network will facilitate our naturally collaborative nature in the Medical Center to bring the highest level of care across medical disciplines for children with autism and their families," said Pat Levitt, PhD, director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development.

Yolanda Holmes, RN, CNS, a clinical nurse specialist at Baptist Hospital, has received the Oncology Nursing Excellence Award from the Middle Tennessee Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society. The annual award recognizes an area nurse who demonstrates exceptional commitment to education, community work and the field of oncology.



Yolanda Holmes

In other news from **Baptist Hospital**, the American Diabetes Association recently presented its "Cure, Care, Commitment" Award to the hospital for its outstanding efforts in serving the diabetes community of Tennessee. "Baptist Hospital is doing some wonderful things in the treatment of diabetes in both the

inpatient and outpatient settings from meeting rigorous standards in controlling patients' blood sugar levels to education and counseling," said Glenda Berry, Tennessee executive director of the American Diabetes Association. "Baptist Hospital is the first health care organization in Tennessee to be honored with this newly-created award."

Laerdal Medical Corporation, a leading provider of healthcare solutions, recently recognized **Belmont University's School of Nursing** as a Center of Educational Excellence. The designation will apply for three years and is awarded to centers that have consistently demonstrated excellence in educational philosophy and programs for the purpose of "helping save lives."

KraftCPAs PLLC has been selected by Goldline Research as one of the 10 Most DependableTM Accounting Professionals of the Southeast. Vic Alexander, chief manager of KraftCPAs said, "We were pleased to be the only CPA firm in Tennessee selected for recognition as one of the 10 most dependable. I give credit to our 140 team members who provide excellent service to our clients every day."

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