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ECONOMIC STIMULUS BILL PROMOTES NATIONWIDE ADOPTION OF CPOE *Incentive in Legislation Follows NEHI/MTC Research, Patient Safety Campaign*

CAMBRIDGE, MA (March 2, 2009) – A patient safety campaign by the New England Healthcare Institute (NEHI) and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) has taken a major step forward thanks to the new federal economic stimulus bill, which includes provisions supporting the adoption of computerized physician order entry (CPOE).

The legislation provides incentives to hospitals for the “meaningful adoption” of “qualified electronic health records,” with a reduction in Medicare payments for non-adopting hospitals beginning in 2016. “Qualified electronic health records” are defined as records that include the ability to provide clinical decision support and to support physician order entry – the key elements of CPOE supported by the NEHI/MTC patient safety initiative.

In a 2008 study by NEHI and MTC titled *Saving Lives, Saving Money*, CPOE was found to significantly reduce serious, preventable medication errors like harmful drug interactions or incorrect drug dosing by computerizing the way physicians order prescriptions and tests for their patients. The research estimated that CPOE could prevent 55,000 medication errors and save \$170 million annually in Massachusetts alone. More than one million preventable medication errors occur in the U.S. every year, costing the nation’s health care system an estimated \$52 billion, according to NEHI research.

Following the release of the NEHI/MTC study, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts enacted a law making the adoption of CPOE a condition of hospital licensure by 2012. NEHI and MTC then launched a campaign to inform key federal policymakers of the research findings and the enormous lifesaving potential of CPOE if it were implemented nationwide.

“We are well on our way to full adoption of CPOE by Massachusetts hospitals,” said Wendy Everett, president of NEHI. “Now, thanks to federal policymakers’ commitment to improving patient safety, a critical first step has been taken to ensure that every patient in the nation can benefit from this lifesaving technology.”

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About NEHI

The New England Healthcare Institute is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming health care for the benefit of patients and their families. In partnership with members from all across the health care system, NEHI conducts evidence-based research and stimulates policy change to improve the quality and the value of health care. Together with this unparalleled network of committed health care leaders, NEHI brings an objective, collaborative and fresh voice to health policy. For more information, visit www.nehi.net.