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Redwood MedNet To Test Clinical Message And Document Delivery System For Rural Healthcare Providers In Mendocino County

Internet-based "Mendocino e-Referral Network" Will Link Mendocino County Providers With Goal Of Improving Patient Health Outcomes

UKIAH, Calif. – Dec. 20, 2005 – Redwood MedNet, a Ukiah based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by local physicians and health technology professionals, announced today that it will soon launch the "Mendocino e-Referral Network" to demonstrate a cost-effective clinical messaging system in rural Mendocino County. The project, funded by the Blue Shield of California Foundation, is targeted for testing next summer.

"The absence of large integrated health care systems in rural areas requires innovative solutions that enable health care providers to communicate and share patient documents quickly and efficiently," said Redwood MedNet president Carl Henning, MD. "The e-referral Network holds great promise for creating an electronically integrated community of remotely situated providers, and in the process improve health care for their patients."

First developed in the early 1990s, clinical messaging is now established among health care providers in Santa Cruz, California, and in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, the Hudson River Valley of New York, and in many other communities. The Redwood MedNet demonstration project will bring clinical messaging to Mendocino County health care providers, and will contribute to the national efforts to develop electronic health records for all Americans.

Last year the Blue Shield of California Foundation gave grants totaling \$24 million statewide, up from \$8 million in 2003. This year, it plans to implement another round of grants by year-end, boosting the 2005 total to \$30 million.

About Redwood MedNet

Redwood MedNet is a new nonprofit organization based in Ukiah, California. Redwood MedNet's founding members are physicians working in private practice, emergency departments and public health. The goal of Redwood MedNet is to enable Lake and Mendocino counties to become a center of excellence in improved patient health outcomes through the adoption of modern health information technology.

About Blue Shield Of California Foundation

Blue Shield of California Foundation was formed by Blue Shield of California, a not-for-profit corporation with more than 3.2 million members, 4,300 employees and 20 offices throughout California. The Blue Shield of California Foundation provides charitable contributions and conducts research and supports programs with an emphasis on domestic violence prevention, using technology to promote health, and reducing the number of uninsured. For more information, visit the Blue Shield of California website at www.mylifepath.com or the Foundation at www.blueshieldcafoundation.org.

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