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## **UT Southwestern to accelerate its early leadership in using electronic health records to improve patient care**

DALLAS – Jan. 13, 2011 – As the first major medical center in North Texas to implement electronic medical records in all its clinical practice groups, UT Southwestern Medical Center today applauded the government’s initiative to get hospitals and health care providers across the nation to embrace new health care technology. The medical center said it will achieve the goal of “meaningful use” of electronic health records (EHR) and register for the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

“As the only medical center in North Texas to have ‘meaningful use’ across all of our ambulatory and inpatient settings, we allow patients to be connected to their overall health care, whether they are in the hospital or see their physician at one of our clinics,” said Dr. Bruce A. Meyer, executive vice president for health system affairs at UT Southwestern. “We think it is vitally important for patients to participate in their own care, and the meaningful use of our electronic medical records allows that.”

In addition to its ambulatory clinics, UT Southwestern has expanded its use of electronic medical records throughout its University Hospitals. Since 2005, the medical center’s electronic MyChart product links patients online directly with their UT Southwestern care providers, with more than 50,000 now registered and using it to schedule appointments, request prescription refills or direct private inquiries to their physicians and other health care providers.

“As the leader in implementing electronic medical records, we already have witnessed how this technology can enhance the safety and efficiency of patient care, while providing the analytics so crucial to achieving evidenced-based quality improvement,” said Kirk A. Kirksey, vice president for information resources at UT Southwestern.

“Moreover, as a major clinical research institution, electronic records enable us uniquely to integrate data from clinical trials to accelerate the delivery of the very latest discoveries as we seek to provide the highest quality of patient care,” Mr. Kirksey said.

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With the government's ARRA initiative, January 2011 marks the first time in our nation's history that hospitals and eligible health care providers can register their intent to achieve "meaningful use" of certified electronic health records and qualify for incentive payments under the HITECH Act portion of ARRA. This program is accelerating the transformation of health care that was already happening, moving the country closer to nationwide interoperable electronic patient records.

"UT Southwestern is proud to have been the only medical center and hospital selected to be a founding member and to serve on the board of the North Texas Regional Extension Center," Mr. Kirksey said. "We are extending our early leadership now by actively promoting the expanded use of electronic medical records in physician offices and other health care facilities across this region."

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