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For immediate release

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Partners HealthCare Text Messaging Program Has Positive Results for Pregnant Women in Lynn

Boston, October 22, 2010 – A text messaging program funded by Partners HealthCare has been successful in encouraging pregnant women in Lynn to get the proper amount of pre-natal care. In a pilot program, Lynn Community Health Center (LCHC) and Partners HealthCare's Center for Connected Health enrolled 25 pregnant women in a program which offered informational and supportive text messages throughout their pregnancies and two months post-partum. The goal was to offer the program to younger women who have limited support systems in place and would truly benefit from additional reminders about healthy pregnancy. A recent finding by the Nielsen Company showed text messages as a preferred form of communication with teens and young people sending and receiving up to 100 texts a day. The women, age 22 on average, received between one and four text messages per week. Results of patient surveys and review of the data showed women who got text messages from their clinical team received the recommended level of pre-natal care 9% more than other pregnant women who did not get text messages.

Patients in the text messaging group said they would recommend this kind of program to other pregnant women. One patient described the text message program this way, "It made me feel like I had more support. It provides you a number to call, so it was like someone was on call for me."

"We were extremely pleased to see the effective and positive response to our first experience with a text messaging campaign," said Lori Abrams Berry, Executive Director of Lynn Community Health Center. "We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Partners HealthCare and North Shore Medical Center (NSMC) in order to provide the most innovative and quality care possible to our patients."

The text messages were one-way, and designed to encourage patients with positive reminders and educational messages. Text messages were offered in English or Spanish, and each message included a phone number to reach the OB clinical team.

Some of the messages patients received were: “Hi, it’s your OB team reminding you to count your baby’s kicks. Call us @ (781) 581-3900 if there is a change in frequency,” or “Your OB team is checking in. Have you scheduled your ultrasound? It’s baby picture time! Let us know if we can help.”

“There are some women who go through their entire pregnancy with minimal support other than that of their OB/GYN office,” said Leanne McDermott RN, Lynn Community Health Center. “The text messaging program provides another opportunity for healthcare providers to reach out, providing additional support and education that will help to ensure that they and their babies will get the right amount of pre-natal care. Through the text messaging program, we saw an improvement in the level of appointments the women had, and it also gave patients a constant reminders of the fact that we care and are only a phone call away.”

Gary Gottlieb, MD, President and CEO of Partners HealthCare described the text messaging program as the latest in a series of clinical collaborations among the health center, North Shore Medical Center and Partners HealthCare saying “Partners HealthCare and Lynn Community Health Center share a deep commitment to helping patients have access to the highest quality and cost effective care possible. This texting program is part of doing everything we can to ensure healthy birth outcomes for pregnant women,” said Dr. Gottlieb.

The text messaging and evaluation was provided by the Center for Connected Health, a division of Partners HealthCare, which is developing programs to move care from the hospital or doctor’s office into the day-to-day lives of patients. “We are using technology in exciting and new ways to deliver quality care to patients, connect providers and patients and provide educational messages and support. Text messaging is proving to be an effective way to engage patients in their care,” said Joseph C. Kvedar, MD, Director Center for Connected Health. “Our program with the Lynn Community Health Center is a great example of how simple technology can help to improve care and outcomes.”

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About Partners HealthCare

Partners HealthCare is an integrated health system founded by Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital. In addition to its two academic medical centers, the Partners system includes community and specialty hospitals, community health centers, a physician network, home health and long-term care services, and other health-related entities. Partners is one of the leading biomedical research organizations and a principal teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Partners HealthCare is a non-profit organization.

About Lynn Community Health Center

The mission of the Lynn Community Health Center is to provide comprehensive healthcare to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. It has served as the primary source of medical services in Lynn, one of the most medically underserved communities in the Commonwealth, since 1971. It provided over 173,000 outpatient encounters for 33,286 patients this past year - over one out of every three Lynn residents and 45% of its children. The Health Center provides a full scope of health care services to the community: pediatric, family practice, adult medical and ob/gyn primary care services, specialty services, behavioral health and social services, health education, family planning, comprehensive HIV/AIDS services, nutrition services, a dental clinic, and eye clinic, and pharmacy services.

About the Center for Connected Health

The Center for Connected Health, a division of Partners HealthCare, is creating effective, new solutions and innovative interventions to move care from the hospital or doctor's office into the day-to-day lives of patients. Our programs use a combination of remote-monitoring technology, sensors, and online communications and intelligence to improve patient adherence, engagement and clinical outcomes. The Center also offers expert online second opinions, enhanced medical education and training, and engages in innovative research to discover new pathways to better care, including the use of virtual worlds and online coaching. Visit www.connected-health.org.