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Health Sciences South Carolina Launches Nation's First Statewide Clinical Data Warehouse

Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina, the University of South Carolina and major SC health care systems collaborate to track 3.2 million patients, 25 million health records

COLUMBIA, S.C. – A revolutionary information technology project launched by [Health Sciences South Carolina](#) (HSSC) could lead to major breakthroughs in improving the health of South Carolinians and attract millions of dollars of investment to the state's economy, including the recruitment of biomedical clinical trials and the development of next-generation pharmaceuticals and medical devices—right here to South Carolina.

[HSSC's Clinical Data Warehouse](#) (CDW) links and matches de-identified (anonymous) electronic patient records from South Carolina's largest health care systems to enable providers and researchers to follow patient conditions in real-time. It also allows biomedical researchers to conduct patient-centered outcomes research and comparative effectiveness studies across a much broader and aggregated patient population base. This is the first system of its kind to bring together three major research universities and several large health care systems.

Bioinformatics for the system came from the Medical University of South Carolina, while the University of South Carolina developed the operations software. Clemson University hosts and provides patient privacy and security for the CDW. And all participating HSSC member hospitals share their data.

The project is a reality in large part thanks to [The Duke Endowment](#), which has made major contributions of over \$32 million to HSSC to fund the CDW and other health care initiatives. The South Carolina General Assembly also provided critical support through the creation of the South CarolinaSmartState Program.

Mary Piepenbring, Vice President of The Duke Endowment, said the foundation is proud of its longstanding commitment to Health Sciences South Carolina. "The Endowment's support of the Clinical Data Warehouse initiative falls squarely within our mission to promote health in both Carolinas. This innovative health care tool has the potential to inform and improve health care outcomes in South Carolina and to serve as a model for information sharing."

Earlier this year, HSSC began populating the database with historical data from [Greenville Hospital System](#), the [Medical University of South Carolina](#) and [Palmetto Health](#). The database currently contains more than 3.2 million medical records. Data from Spartanburg Regional Health System will be added in 2014. The CDW will eventually have data from all HSSC member health systems.

This is an unprecedented achievement for South Carolina," said Dr. Jay Moskowitz, HSSC president. "While the United Health Foundation ranks South Carolina among the lowest states in overall health status, we can now say with confidence that we rank among the highest places in the world with this

level of collaboration and this kind of access to knowledge that will improve health for all South Carolinians.”

Moskowitz said the CDW will be invaluable to researchers studying rare conditions that affect underrepresented populations. For example, less than one percent of the population is diagnosed with Sickle Cell disease, and using data from a single South Carolina health system yields a very small patient population from which to build a potential research patient cohort. However, with the Clinical Data Warehouse, a researcher can triple or quadruple previous sample sizes, expanding queries to include more than 3 million patients across the state. Researchers in South Carolina now have a better chance of determining the potential success of a given research project and easier ways to build patient cohorts. Moskowitz also pointed to the potential for groundbreaking research on obesity and hypertension, conditions which affect many South Carolinians.

University of South Carolina President Harris Pastides also noted this benefit of the CDW.

“Researchers need large pools of data to develop and test scientific theories. Until recently, they had no simple way to study broad patient populations and doing so in real-time was almost unthinkable,” Pastides said. “The CDW provides clinical researchers with an integrated learning tool where the statewide patient population can now be surveyed and tracked in real time.”

Charles Beaman, president and CEO of [Palmetto Health](#), said the CDW is an example of a new sense of collaboration among universities and health care providers.

“We are sharing data in ways we never have before, because we all realize that we share the same goals and the same mission: to serve the people of South Carolina and help them improve their lives through better health,” Beaman said.

If you would like to learn more about HSSC, CDW and other research endeavors, visit www.healthsciencessc.org.

About Health Sciences South Carolina

Health Sciences South Carolina (HSSC) was established in 2004 as the nation's first statewide biomedical research collaborative. Today its members include six of the state's largest health systems—[Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center](#), [Palmetto Health](#), [Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System](#), [McLeod Health](#), [AnMed Health](#), and [Self Regional Healthcare](#)—and the state's largest research-intensive universities—[Clemson University](#), the [Medical University of South Carolina](#), and the [University of South Carolina](#). The collaborative was formed with the vision of transforming the state's public health and economic wellbeing through research. It also is committed to educating and training the health care workforce.

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