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**CareSpark awarded \$2.68M federal contract  
for health information network**

CareSpark of Kingsport, Tenn., has been awarded a 12-month contract for \$2.68M by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, as part of a national initiative to improve patient safety, healthcare quality and cost through the adoption of health information technology and clinical best practices.

On Oct. 5, 2007, Secretary Michael Leavitt of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that CareSpark is one of nine organizations selected for a contract award; the funding will support testing and development of interfaces between CareSpark's regional health information network and other health information exchanges across the country, further enabling the secure flow of information between patients, clinicians, hospitals, labs, pharmacies and others responsible for delivering healthcare services. One key requirement is the ability to protect patient privacy and confidentiality by preventing unauthorized access to personal health information; another is the ability to deliver a summary medical record in the event of an emergency. To accomplish these goals, CareSpark will draw upon the expertise of international technology companies that include ActiveHealth Management, CGI, Quovadx, Initiate Systems, MedSeek and Oracle, as well as regional small businesses such as LucentGlow, Holston Technology, Intellithought, and Holston Medical Group's OnePartner.

“We are grateful and delighted to be selected. CareSpark has been working hard to help people in our region improve their health and reduce rates and impacts of chronic disease, premature mortality and other health disparities we see in our region; we see this as both another validation of our sustainable model and a wonderful opportunity to leverage the success of our region’s grassroots collaboration,” said Dr. John Dreyzehner M.D., M.P.H., CareSpark board chair and director of the Cumberland Plateau and Lenowisco Health Districts, which include 7 county health departments in southwest Virginia. “We are in this position because of our scores of dedicated volunteers and our hardworking staff and the confidence, ideas and commitment of our regional, state and national partners. We are proud to partner regionally and nationally as we continue to learn and work to improve health through the wise use of health information technology and evidence-based clinical best practices.”

CareSpark’s regional effort serves the 17-county region of southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee, and is designed to improve health through the collaborative use of health information. Since its inception in 2005 as a not-for-profit organization, CareSpark has partnered with local healthcare providers, purchasers and policy-makers at federal and state levels, and technology companies to develop a sustainable system that supports patient care delivery, public health research and population health improvement. CareSpark participated in the first phase of work to develop the Nationwide Health Information Network in January 2007, as part of the prototype demonstration of secure health information exchange through a consortium led by Accenture. CareSpark has also been recognized by the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence with the 2006 “Commitment to Quality” Award.

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For more information on CareSpark, Inc, contact Liesa Jenkins, Executive Director, at (423) 963-4208 or [ljenkins@carespark.com](mailto:ljenkins@carespark.com).

For more information on the Nationwide Health Information Network, please contact Nancy Szemraj, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 202-690-7385, or [Nancy.Szemraj@hhs.gov](mailto:Nancy.Szemraj@hhs.gov)