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NEWS RELEASE

## UB and AHRM, Inc. Help Buffalo Join the Electronic Medical Revolution

Center of Excellence project will serve as statewide model, reduce errors, boost efficiency

Release Date: March 3, 2009

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- The Obama administration's push to move health care from handwritten charts and prescriptions into the electronic age is getting a boost in Western New York with new funding to establish a Medication Management Research Network in the University at Buffalo's New York State Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics and Life Sciences.

The Medication Management Research Network (MMRN) is funded by an \$880,000 grant from an anonymous donor to UB and AHRM, Inc., a local company based in the UB Center of Excellence.

AHRM, Inc. a clinical research organization & site management organization, located at the COE, is a spin off of another company that had relocated from North Carolina in 2007 to develop technologies in partnership with UB COE researchers. Since then, the company has grown from two to 15 employees. As a result of the new grant, several more employees will be hired by ARHM and UB's Center of Excellence.

The digitization of medical records, prescriptions and other health information will, for the first time, make it possible to ask critical research questions that go to the heart of how to provide the best care for patients, explained Gene D. Morse, Pharm.D., principal investigator on the MMRN, professor and associate dean for clinical and translational research in the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

"The MMRN will allow us to conduct valuable research on how specific health care decisions impact patient outcomes and health care costs, including ways to significantly reduce

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UB researcher Gene Morse is working with a local company to create a network to manage patient data and records.

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dangerous and costly medication errors that cause illness, injury or death to an estimated 1.5 million Americans each year," said Morse.

"With this funding, researchers at UB and AHRM, Inc. are taking a lead role in moving health care in Western New York closer to the federal government's goal of improving efficiency and cutting costs by making the transition to electronic medical records," said Bruce A. Holm, Ph.D., senior vice provost and executive director of UB's New York State Center of Bioinformatics and Life Sciences.

"At the same time, it allows the UB Center of Excellence to draw on its strengths, its powerful and diverse research capabilities in pharmaceutical safety, medication management, data mining and outcomes analysis, and tie them much more closely to the immediate medical needs of this community," he said.

In its economic recovery package, the Obama administration intends to spend \$19 billion to accelerate the use of computerized medical records in doctors' offices and hospitals.

The Medication Management Research Network was developed during the past year and a half by the UB Center of Excellence and the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in partnership with AHRM with the goal of establishing a statewide infrastructure for conducting research in medication management.

Morse added that the MMRN will use information technology to link scientific and medical literature to the clinical level, expediting the application of new drug research findings to patients.

In addition, he said that it will accelerate the transition to personalized medicine through pharmacogenomics, in which medicines are prescribed based on a patient's genetic profile.

"The MMRN will provide small biotechnology companies with an infrastructure in which they can conduct the clinical trials necessary for demonstrating the clinical and economic outcomes data that will determine the approval and eventual reimbursement for pharmacogenomic testing," Morse said.

A major goal of the initiative is to harness some of the most powerful technological tools available at UB's Center for Computational Research to make groundbreaking advances in medication management.

"The outcomes analysis of these data interests us in terms of what they will mean for patient safety, and economic, epidemiologic and quality of life outcomes," said Amy Hayward, co-investigator on the project and founder and president of AHRM, Inc., Applied Healthcare Resource Management, which conducts clinical trials for pharmaceutical and drug discovery firms.

"Partnering with UB's Center for Computational Research is

attractive in that this type of endeavor requires a very robust technological platform and infrastructure given the end objective: a central repository of massive amounts of clinical data," she said.

In addition to Morse and Hayward, other investigators involved with the MMRN include Werner Ceusters, UB professor of psychiatry; Tom Furlani, director of the Center for Computational Research at the Center of Excellence; Qing Ma, research assistant professor at the Center of Excellence; Barry Smith, SUNY Distinguished Professor, Julian Park Professor of Philosophy at UB and head of the UB Ontology Research Group at the Center of Excellence; Karl D. Fiebelkorn, associate dean of student affairs and professional relations and clinical associate professor of pharmacy; and Jack Brown, Linda Catanzaro, Fred Doloresco, and Mark J. Wrobel, all clinical assistant professors of pharmacy at UB.