MMIC Group Launches Long Term Care Program

MMIC recently expanded its insurance services to the growing population of long term care providers.

By focusing on the healthcare community’s needs, MMIC hopes to offer insurance expertise and exceptional service to a new population of the healthcare industry both now and moving into the future.

“We are thrilled to be offering services to this area of the healthcare industry and continuing to expand our mission of protecting and promoting the practice of good medicine,” said MMIC President & CEO Bill McDonough.

“We’re always looking for opportunities to serve the healthcare community and hope to expand our partnerships by not limiting ourselves to one particular healthcare segment.”

Eligible facility types include skilled care, assisted living and continuing care retirement communities. These facilities must operate within MMIC’s underwriting territory to be eligible for coverage. Services are available in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

“MMIC is proud to announce this news to our policyholders, who provide excellent medical care and first-rate service to their patients,” said Dr. Mark Odland, MMIC board chair.

“Providers in every realm of the healthcare industry need reliable and competitive insurance readily available so they can focus on patient care.”

As the face of healthcare continues to change, MMIC will continue to offer outstanding coverage by expanding services to quality healthcare providers.

Dividends Announced for 2011

The MMIC board of directors recently declared 2011 dividends for qualifying policyholders. A total of $6 million in dividends will be returned to eligible policyholders in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

“If you have questions, contact your agent, broker or Toni Thomforde in the MMIC Finance Department at 1-800-328-5532 (ext. 6770).
MMIC Offers Physician Leadership Scholarship

Did you know that MMIC provides scholarships for physicians enrolled in leadership training programs?

Our Physician Leadership Scholarship has recently been expanded to include all physicians insured by MMIC, participating in leadership training. We are committed to supporting the development of physicians who are actively becoming leaders in promoting the practice of good medicine.

To be eligible for the MMIC Physician Leadership Scholarship, courses and programs must develop physician business and leadership skills and be at least three months in length. Certificate or degree programs are preferred, but not required, for this scholarship.

Physicians must be in practice for seven years to apply for the scholarship and be insured by MMIC. Qualified physicians are eligible for up to $5,000 in scholarships to offset tuition. Recipients of scholarships will be required to provide a report on how this educational program will be applied toward promoting good medicine.

As a leader in the medical professional liability insurance and health IT industries, we are pleased to help promote the advancement of your practices through this scholarship. Those interested are invited to contact Libby Lincoln at Libby.Lincoln@MMICGroup.com or 952-838-6752.

We’d like to hear from you!

The Review newsletter is published by MMIC Group, based in Minneapolis, Minn. If you’d like to receive this newsletter electronically — or if you have comments to share with us — we’d love to receive your feedback. Please send an e-mail to: Communications@MMICGroup.com.

Lincoln Receives PIAA Leadership Award

The Physician Insurers Association of America (PIAA) has presented MMIC’s Libby Lincoln with the Association’s Leadership Award.

Lincoln, Senior Vice President of Law and Health Policy, was recognized for dedicating countless hours and expertise to furthering the goals of the PIAA. Lincoln stepped down as chair of the Regulatory Affairs Committee after serving in that position or as co-chair since 1990. She also currently serves on PIAA’s Legislative Oversight Committee and the Leadership Camp Section. She will remain on the Regulatory Affairs Committee until 2011.

James F. Carland, III, MD, Chair, PIAA Board of Directors, presents the PIAA Leadership Award to Libby Lincoln of MMIC.
On the evening of September 14, groundskeepers were replacing the sod at the Minnesota Twins’ new baseball stadium – and MMIC customers were on hand to witness the behind-the-scenes work.

Representatives from clinics and hospitals across Minnesota joined MMIC leaders at Target Field in downtown Minneapolis. The evening included dinner and tours of the stadium, along with a chance to explore the bullpen, dugout, locker room and get within inches of the baseball diamond and outfield.

The gathering was the first of its kind, and MMIC leaders are planning to host similar customer events in other geographic locations in an effort to learn more about your needs and the challenges you face at work each day.

“Meeting face to face with clients to learn how we can serve them better is a goal we’ve set for ourselves in the coming year,” said Julie Stafford, Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Communications.

If you’d be interested in attending, send an e-mail to communications@MMICGroup.com with the subject line “customer events.”
As you evaluate EHR systems, there are some aspects of your network infrastructure that need to be analyzed. Many clinics are surprised by the amount of network upgrades that are needed during their EHR implementation. They do not anticipate these changes and therefore fail to budget for them either. If you identify and plan for your needs ahead of time, you can minimize the number of costly surprises later on.

An EHR works in conjunction with your people, your IT assets, your physical infrastructure and your processes. So before you select an EHR system, you’ll want to ask some key questions:

What technical resources do you have to assist you with your EHR Implementation and provide ongoing support?

Do you have someone on staff or do you need an outside consultant? This person — or team — will need to become familiar with your practice and should have a thorough understanding of the range of possible IT solutions.

What additional equipment will you need for your network?

Understanding the EHR’s specifications for PCs, servers, etc., and matching it against your current network will reduce the chance of unpleasant surprises.

You may need to do a network inventory if you don’t already have one. It should include everything from the servers, PCs and tablets, firewall and routers. You will also want to look at your Internet bandwidth and evaluate the flexibility of wireless versus the dependability and speed of wired connections.

What is your patient flow?

EHR systems are a part of a larger patient care process. Interview staff and monitor the flow of information from your core processes, including making appointments, prescription refills, lab orders and other activities. Also, make sure you do this for each location because they may each have their own processes. By reviewing each process, you will help ensure that your entire practice will have access to the equipment and information they need to treat patients efficiently.

Do you have a secure space for your servers?

Your server environment is sure to grow with the implementation of an EHR system. Most practices find they add two to three new servers. You will need an application server, possibly a separate database server and maybe even a terminal server.

Each server adds to the electrical load of the room and adds to the heat level of the space. You may want to evaluate having a dedicated electrical circuit installed for the server room. Keeping the room at the correct temperature is a critical step in the owning your own servers. An overheated server room can cause damage to the equipment — especially the hard drives of the server — which could cause loss of critical patient data. Proper space planning is essential.

There are many questions to consider when preparing your network for an EHR. Having a clear picture of your existing infrastructure and where you need to upgrade will reduce the number of surprises during your implementation. Proper planning will give you time to review your options and make the best decisions for your clinic.

These questions can seem daunting, but if you address them early, those surprises are a lot less surprising. At MMIC Health IT, we’ve helped many clients through the EHR implementation process. We’ve put together a detailed guide to EHR Readiness. To download it, visit our website at MMICGroup.com/techsolutions.
Making the Connection: Wired vs. Wireless in an EHR system

While there are many decisions to make about your EHR system, some of the most important focus on those points where your people interface with your system: desktops, laptops, and tablets.

And that comes down to one basic choice: wired vs. wireless.

Wired connections are highly dependable, but limiting. You will want to start with a proven best practice: install network cabling to all existing or planned stationary computers. Use a certified cabling company for both the cable that runs in the wall and the patch cables that connect to your work stations.

Wireless connections allow your people to move from room to room without logging in and out of computers. In this way, wireless systems mimic the patient charts many of them remember from the days before digital record keeping. There’s much to be said for such flexibility.

But there are also downsides to wireless, especially in a medical setting where interference from X-ray rooms and adjoining office suites is often an issue. You’re more likely to experience interference or dropped connections which can lead to recently entered data being lost.

Because of these issues, wireless networks often require more maintenance. You will want to complete a wireless survey every six to 12 months to make sure that no new networks are posing a threat to the efficient operation of your network.

What’s the best solution? Your internal team or outside consultant will help you weigh all the factors. Many practices make some use of wireless but install a wired network as a backup.

At MMIC Health IT, we’ve helped many clients weigh such pros and cons as they begin the EHR implementation process. We’ve put together a detailed guide to EHR Readiness. To download it, visit our website at MMICGroup.com/techsolutions.

MMIC Health IT will be offering a variety of online training opportunities in the upcoming weeks. Listed below is our current schedule of events. We hope you can attend.

October 4, 2010
EHR 5.6 System Templates
10 a.m.

October 11, 2010
EHR 5.6 Practice Templates
10 a.m.

October 20, 2010
Meaningful Use session one – A look at the first five measures within NextGen®
10 a.m.

October 21, 2010
EHR 5.6 Template Editor Enhancements
10 a.m.

October 26, 2010
EPM Data Integrity Reports
10 a.m.

November 18, 2010
EHR 5.6 SystemAdmin/File Maintenance Enhancements
10 a.m.

To view the training schedule, course descriptions and to register for classes, visit our training center at https://mmic.webex.com/tc or follow the link to the training center from the MMIC Health IT page at MMICGroup.com.

If you have any questions regarding these classes, contact the Client Support Center at ClientSupport@MMICGroup.com or call 952-838-6868.
MMA Offers Peer Grouping Webinars

Are you feeling lost when it comes to understanding Provider Peer Grouping*? The Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) and MMIC have partnered to help you find your way through the Peer Grouping territory and map out a plan to take your practice in the right direction.

Webinars explaining the new health reform initiative can be found online at MMAonline.net/peergrouping.

The series “Preparing Your Practice for Quality and Cost Reporting” offers online videos and slideshows. Previous webinars are available and focus on the following topics:

- Provider Peer Grouping Overview
- Total Care Reporting

Future webinars in the series will address these subjects:

- Condition Specific Reporting
- The Latest Science on Quality and Cost Reporting
- Reading and Using your Provider Report

To register, visit the MMA website listed above.

*For more information about Provider Peer Grouping – a key health reform initiative – visit MMICGroup.com and click the “Health Reform…” link on the home page.