



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EIC and COMCARE Announce Submission of Draft Hospital Emergency Resource Standard to OASIS

WASHINGTON – January 23, 2006 – The Emergency Interoperability Consortium (EIC) and COMCARE today announced the submission of the Hospital AVailability Exchange (HAVE) draft emergency message specification to the OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee for review and formalization. Designed by emergency response leaders to be used in day-to-day emergencies, mass-casualty incidents, and preparedness exercises, the HAVE data standard will allow hospitals and other emergency response organizations to know instantly the bed availability, status and capacity of individual hospitals.

Richard Taylor, Chair of COMCARE and Executive Director of the North Carolina Wireless 911 Board, said, “Interoperable data messages are essential to informed and rapid response to emergencies of all kinds. Today, 911 centers, emergency managers and state health departments can only get this information with time consuming individual phone calls. Every level of the emergency response continuum will benefit from the use of the standardized data HAVE messages will carry.”

Matt Walton, Chairman of the EIC, stated, “The world is facing threats of terrorism and infectious diseases, such as an avian flu epidemic. HAVE will allow us to use and share hospital resources more effectively.” Walton noted that the specification had been developed by an open consensus process, managed over 9 months by COMCARE, involving first a broad-based group of experts and official representatives of the emergency response professions that produce or desire to use the information it contains, and then the Department of Homeland Security’s Emergency Data Exchange Language (EDXL) Standards Working Group process. HAVE then received formal consideration and approval by the EIC.

“HAVE will aid response to both large scale mass casualty incidents and everyday emergencies,” noted Dr. Steve Cantrill, Associate Director of Emergency Medicine at Denver Health. “My sincere thanks go to all those who worked so hard to create the possibility of interoperability in this key area, including my colleagues at HHS and DHS who funded this successful collaboration of many organizations and agencies.” Taylor added, “We believe this specification is unique in that the financial support for its development came from two federal departments: DHS’s Disaster Management Program that funded COMCARE to facilitate the process, and the Department of Health and Human Services’ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). We also deeply appreciate the leadership and support provided by the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association and its Hospital Emergency Management Committee, and by AHRQ’s project team, led by Dr. Steve Cantrill of Denver Health Medical Center,” Taylor added.

HAVE is a draft XML specification, under the EDXL umbrella of emergency messaging standards. It enables the exchange of information related to medical and health organizations and their resources among other hospitals, state health departments and associations, emergency managers, 9-1-1 centers, and other responsible emergency agencies involved in response and preparedness. For more information about emergency data standards, EDXL and HAVE, see <http://eic.org/standards.htm>, <http://www.comcare.org/Data%20Standards.html>, <http://www.comcare.org/HAVE.html>.

About the EIC and COMCARE:

The EIC is made up of more than 30 technology companies working to advance interoperability in emergency data communications. The group works closely with executive agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security, and with Congress, to both support the development and deployment of emergency standards, and to advocate policies that will allow for the free flow of data across all types of computer networks through any means of transmission. See www.eic.org.

COMCARE is a national non-profit alliance dedicated to advancing emergency response. We promote the adoption of modern, interoperable emergency systems and the development of new procedures, training, and tools to maximize their value for emergency responders. We encourage cooperation across professional, jurisdictional and geographic lines, seeking to improve effectiveness through solutions that integrate emergency response professions, government, the public, and private industry. COMCARE's 100+ organizational members represent the wide diversity of the emergency response community. For more information visit www.comcare.org.

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