



News Release **For Immediate Release**

Media Contact:

Krista Dany
PR & Marketing Coordinator
WHITIA
(312) 994-9440
Krista@whitia.org

WHITIA Announces Launch of Healthy Communities Initiative and Selection of Alivio Medical Center as Its First U.S. Project Site

CHICAGO, IL, January 12, 2011 – WHITIA, a global non-profit social venture focused on bringing affordable healthcare technologies to medical facilities in limited-resource areas, today announced the launch of its Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI). Through HCI, WHITIA will help urban and rural community health centers obtain essential healthcare technologies such as digital X-ray and telemedicine systems. WHITIA's first HCI project will be a digital X-ray installation at Alivio Medical Center, a bilingual, bicultural community health center located on Chicago's Southwest side.

"Community health centers (CHCs) play a vital role by serving as the medical home for low-income patients", said Ivy Walker, WHITIA's CEO. "They improve access to care for medically underserved communities and provide high-quality primary and preventative health care for patients regardless of their ability to pay. In order for CHCs to provide a comprehensive range of primary care services, they must be properly equipped with appropriate health technologies and medical expertise. However, many lack the health technologies they need leading to 'gaps' in the community health care infrastructure. These gaps can result in missed opportunities to provide care in a lower cost setting and lead to a heavier reliance on local hospital emergency departments."

"CHCs are struggling under the weight of state budget cuts while at the same time experiencing an increase in the number of patients in need of their services", continued Walker. "Add to that the recent projections that community health centers nationwide will see an increase of 20 million new patients by 2014 as a result of health care reform, and the picture becomes clear that now more than ever we must mobilize in order to ensure that these vital care givers have the technologies and resources they need."

Alivio Medical Center has been serving Chicago's predominantly Latino Pilsen and Little Village communities for more than 20 years. The community health center offers a full range of primary and preventative care services including adult and pediatric medicine, obstetrics, gynecology, dentistry and mental health services. Alivio also has an onsite pharmacy and diagnostic laboratory. The community health center sees more than 20,000 patients annually through its five locations.

"We are very excited that Alivio was selected to be the first site for WHITIA's Healthy Communities Initiative", said Carmen Velasquez, Alivio's Executive Director. "Offering digital X-ray onsite improves our ability to provide the best possible care for our patients, a goal we constantly strive to meet."

The digital X-ray installation at Alivio Medical Center involves the participation of several of WHITIA's partners including Merge Healthcare which will be providing the image management software and SEDECAL which will be providing the digital X-ray system. The Alivio project is being funded by grants from Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust and the McCormick Foundation.

About WHITIA

WHITIA is a non-profit social venture working to improve the health of people living in poor areas by helping limited resource medical facilities gain access to affordable essential healthcare technologies such as digital imaging and telemedicine solutions. WHITIA does this by building relationships with key stakeholders including local health authorities, philanthropic organizations, academic institutions, and the healthcare technology industry and by collaborating on the development and sustainable deployment of these technologies. For more information please visit www.whitia.org