



## **Family Health Network Receives National Institutes of Health Grant to study Web options promoting senior independence**

*NIH grant enables Family Health Network  
To test technologies among diverse N.C. elderly populations*

**CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – October 19 2011** – Family Health Network, an RTP-based healthcare technology company, will initiate a senior-focused research project in North Carolina. Supported by a \$190,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the study aim is to determine Internet use preferences that may support longer periods of health and independent living among older adults. The goal of this research is to create connectivity programs that allow seniors to age in place while communicating with caregivers and loved ones via the Internet.

Designed to examine technology use by seniors across health and socioeconomic spectrums, the study will assess the capacity of Family Health Network's *Connected for Life*<sup>SM</sup> software to meet the communication, information-seeking and health promotion needs of community-dwelling older adults. This is the first phase of a potentially larger investigation of Web-based applications for the elderly. Doug Patton, chief knowledge officer at Family Health Network, will serve as the principal investigator. Two researchers from the Institute on Aging at UNC-Chapel Hill – Jennifer Craft-Morgan, Ph.D. and Cherie Rosemond, PT, Ph.D., GCS – will partner with Family Health Network to conduct this research.

Family Health Network develops integrated solutions to connect people with their care providers. Much of the company's initial emphasis has been to create Web-based solutions to serve seniors who often face increasing isolation when mobility becomes challenging. The company's *Connected for Life*<sup>SM</sup> online program enables health care providers and caregivers to remotely monitor, record, and track a patient's health status and medication use on a daily basis. The online program incorporates a user-friendly platform that reduces traditional barriers to computer and Internet use through simple touch-screen technology.

The grant represents the first phase of a larger research endeavor. The NIH funding is known as a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant. If the results of Phase 1 are promising, a competitive process will be launched to seek \$1.5 million in phase-two NIH funding. These funds would be used to validate initial findings and help provide solutions to elderly patients who want to live independently. Further development of the tool will help address reciprocal community, the quality of social relationships, psychological well-being and loneliness – the most frequently identified barriers to communication and technology use.

“This grant allows us to undertake the essential first step to find out what seniors prefer in terms of their daily use of technology,” said Patton , FHN’s chief knowledge officer. “The NIH recognizes the potential offered by user-friendly technology. We believe our tool will play an important role in helping people.”

### **About Family Health Network**

Family Health Network develops integrated technology solutions that connect patients with members of their care team, opening the door to improved communication and better health outcomes. By providing real-time information sharing with health care providers and other members of the care team, this low cost program empowers patients, relieves caregiver stress, lowers health care costs, and improves quality of life. Family Health Network’s *Connected for Life<sup>SM</sup>* holds the promise to be the centerpiece of a next generation of patient-centered care. For more information about Family Health Network, please visit <http://www.familyhealthnetwork.com/>.

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