

Cresco Times-
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²¹ Iowa Communications Network hosts network to connect rural hospitals

Regional Health Services of Howard County is one of 24 health care facilities to be connected in the rural hospitals network

HOWARD COUNTY - Iowa Communications Network (ICN) has recently established 24 health care connections for the Iowa Rural Health Telecommunications Program's (IRHTP) statewide fiber-optic Network hosted by the ICN.

These health care facilities utilize private Ethernet services and Internet, provided by the ICN, to exchange medical information including radiology studies, electronic medical records, remote ICU monitoring, as well as administrative data. In the future, this network may also be used to help form the backbone for the statewide Iowa Health Information Exchange.

The overall goal of the IRHTP consortium, led by the Iowa Hospital

Association (IHA), is to deploy a secure, statewide, high-speed broadband network connecting rural hospitals to vital health care resources without geographic restrictions. Each IRHTP site purchased last-mile fiber

access to their facility, and is participating in cost sharing to acquire network electronics. ICN's backbone completes the high-speed IRHTP core network by providing each core site with redundant 10 gigabit connections.

Dave Lingren, ICN's Executive Director said, "The partnership between IHA and ICN is establishing a Network foundation for health care providers. Offering the conduit for a rural health care facility in southeast Iowa to connect with Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines provides exceptional health care opportunities for Iowans."

ICN is responsible for: inventory control, electronics implementation and testing, connecting sites when the fiber path is installed, customer orders and service turn-up, and on-going maintenance. In the future with private sector partnerships, multiple medical clinics can also be connected to the Network.

ICN collaborated with the

IHA in the development of a grant proposal submitted to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under their Universal Service Administrative Company's Rural Health Care Pilot Program. There will be a total of 84 hospital sites that will be connected for this project and the FCC's grant funding will pay for 85 percent of the entire project. To date, there are 57 last-mile fiber connections completed and available.

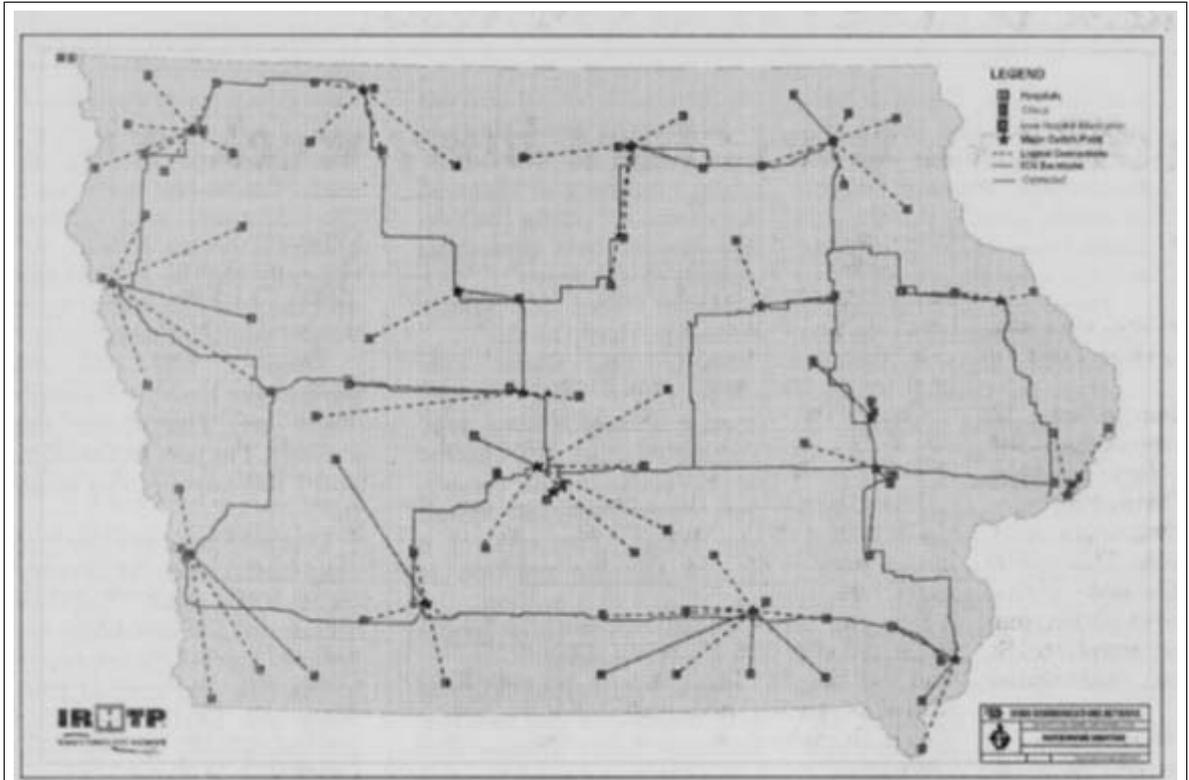
The ICN, a state agency, owns and operates the country's premier fiber-optic network, committed to continued enhancement of distance learning and providing Iowans with equal access to education, health care, and government through data, voice, and video conferencing services.

Headquartered in Des Moines, IHA is a voluntary membership organization representing hospital and health system interests to business, government and consumer audiences. All of Iowa's 118 community hospitals are IHA members.

For more information about the ICN, visit www.icn.state.ia.us. For more information about the IRHTP, visit <http://www.ihaonline.org/publications/fccsplit.shtml>.



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Regional Health Services is one of 24 health care connections included in the Iowa Communications Network. Other Iowa connections include: Mercy Medical Center, Des Moines; Wayne County Hospital, Corydon; Clarinda Regional Health Center, Clarinda; Audubon County Memorial Hospital, Audubon; Radiological Consultants Inc, Cedar Rapids; Regional Medical Center, Manchester; Virginia Gay Hospital, Vinton; Washington Co. Hospital and Clinics, Washington; Floyd County Medical Center, Charles City; Buchanan County Health Center, Independence; St. Anthony Regional Hospital, Carroll; Great River Medical Center, West Burlington; Fort Madison Community Hospital, Fort Madison; Henry County Health Center, Mt Pleasant; Van Buren County Hospital, Keosauqua; Davis County Hospital, Bloomfield; Mercy Medical Center – North Iowa, Mason City; Dallas County Hospital, Perry; Boone County Hospital, Boone; Van Diest Medical Center, Webster City; Iowa Hospital Association, Des Moines; Horn Memorial Hospital, Ida Grove; Genesis Imaging Bettendorf.