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**NEW DATA DEMONSTRATES THAT E-VISITS ACHIEVE
EQUIVALENT CLINICAL OUTCOMES TO TRADITIONAL OFFICE VISITS;
SAVES TIME FOR DERMATOLOGY PATIENTS**

BOSTON, JUNE 3, 2010 -- A recent study conducted by the Center for Connected Health, a division of Partners HealthCare, found that remote online visits with dermatologists, or e-visits, achieved equivalent clinical outcomes for acne patients. Data further revealed that this model of care delivery was popular with participating doctors and patients, ranking e-visits as convenient and time-saving. This study was published in the April issue of *Archives of Dermatology* (Volume 146, No. 4, April 2010).

Following an initial face-to-face consultation, study participants carried out four follow-up visits using either the e-visits technology or conventional office care. E-visits patients were given a digital camera and trained to take and transmit images to their doctor. Every six weeks, patients in the e-visits group were prompted to send images of their skin and an update, via a secure website, to their dermatologist, who then responded with advice and electronic prescriptions. The degree of clinical improvement between both groups was compared.

One hundred twenty one patients with mild to moderate facial acne completed the prospective, randomized controlled study, conducted at Massachusetts General and Brigham and Women's Hospitals in Boston. Quality of care was equivalent in the two groups as measured by a decrease in acne lesions over time. Most patients in the e-visits group agreed that their dermatologist could assess their acne just as well using an e-visit as in person (76%) and that they could express their concerns and questions about acne as well by e-visit as by office visit (83%). 91% of participants would consider using e-visits again.

"This study is among the first to examine the clinical effectiveness of online visits between specialists and patients without them needing to communicate simultaneously," said Alice Watson, MD, MPH, Corporate Manager, Center for Connected Health, and the study's lead author. "This data shows that digital images and patient survey responses provide sufficient information for dermatologists to make appropriate treatment decisions. E-visits achieved comparable clinical results, were time-saving for patients and well-received by patients and physicians."

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Participants completed their e-visits at varying times during the day, with 40% of patients completing their e-visits during working hours (8am to 5pm). Dermatologists were equally likely to complete their portion of the e-visit during the workday (50%) or after hours (50%).

“The e-visits platform has proven to be a true visit replacement rather than just an addition to conventional care. This data demonstrates that this technology can successfully be used to deliver follow up care over a period of several months,” added Joseph C. Kvedar, MD, Director, Center for Connected Health. “We believe that this model of care could be expanded to other non-urgent and chronic conditions, such as diabetes or hypertension. The Center is currently conducting additional research to determine if equivalent quality of care can be maintained across other clinical conditions.”

RelayHealth provided the e-visits platform used in this study.

About the Center for Connected Health

The Center for Connected Health, a division of Partners HealthCare, is creating effective, new solutions and innovative interventions to deliver quality patient care outside of the traditional medical setting. Our programs use a combination of remote-monitoring technology, sensors, and online communications and intelligence to improve patient adherence, engagement and clinical outcomes. The Center also offers expert online second opinions, enhanced medical education and training, and engages in innovative research to discover new pathways to better care, including the use of virtual worlds and online coaching. Visit www.connected-health.org.

Boston-based Partners HealthCare is an integrated health system founded in 1994 by Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital. In addition to its two academic medical centers, the Partners system also includes community and specialty hospitals, community health centers, a physician network, home health and long-term care services, and other health-related entities. Partners is one of the nation’s leading biomedical research organizations and a principal teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Partners is a non-profit organization. Visit www.partners.org.

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