Dr. David Carr welcomed the group to Stockton and articulated Stockton’s interest in helping this process move forward.

II. TOPIC: DISCUSSION:

Assemblyman Blee and Al Gutierrez who had approached Stockton to enlist their support and participation, described their interest in broadening the Communication Council’s partnership. Assemblyman Blee indicated that there is a need for a broader level of expertise as well as the will to “push the ball over the goal line”. In addition, Assemblyman Blee described the Monetor (a venture capital firm’s) interest in lending its resources and expertise to this effort.

Al Gutierrez described the context in which we’re operating as offering many opportunities. The Gingrich/Clinton’s collaboration and consensus around this issue is emblematic of the kind of support it’s engendering. There is also potential for federal dollars. Al also underscored that a regional health information retreat is taking place and restated his convictions that Stockton’s expertise could be a wonderful fit for this effort.

III. TOPIC: CONTEXT FOR THIS REQUEST

Mal Hollander reinforced that the rollback of the Stark Regulations, which allows for hospitals and physicians to collaborate without fear of anti-trust activities, again reinforced the fact that this is an apt time to move forward.

Tom Ruben described the evolution of the Transition Council, the Communication Committee and the community’s interest in an effort which would address the fragmentation in medical care and the problems experienced by individuals who fall between the cracks in the system. The group also described the partners in the Transition Council which include assisted living facilities, day care providers, home care providers, insurers and other key parties.

Kenneth Atlee reinforced the importance of hospitals being in a position to
facilitate information sharing between physicians and the community. He stressed the critical importance of getting real time information at the juncture that consumers enter an emergency room. Al Gutierrez again expressed his interest in having a virtual community among providers involved in patient care.

IV. TOPIC: TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS
DISCUSSION:
The group agreed that there are many factors that support this initiative in Atlantic County. Key considerations include the following:

- The health care providers in this community have evinced a willingness to cooperate.
- Both of the hospitals’ systems are using the same patient care information platform.
- There is a need to agree upon common data sets.
- Key insurance providers need to participate in this initiative. Medicaid’s seat at the table is important. Horizon has expressed an interest in similar efforts. It is the group’s hope that Medicare can eventually be brought to the table.
- Assemblyman Blee reinforced that this is a perfect fit for Stockton College, which is developing burgeoning programs addressing the needs of the for and non-profit communities in this region.
- Medicare is making gratis software available to physicians’ offices.

V. TOPIC: BEST PRACTICES/NEXT STEPS:
DISCUSSION:
Stockton has initiated a search of current examples of Regional Health Information Organizations best practices. Kentucky and Massachusetts have programs, which are being rolled out. The group agreed that either having some committee members visit one of these settings or bringing representatives Kentucky or Massachusetts here is a critical next step. Key elements related to this initiative are:

- AtlantiCare and Shore’s representatives offered to underwrite the cost of bringing representatives in.
- Assemblyman Blee was “volunteered” to find complementary accommodations for these visitors.
- At some point the group will identify key questions to broach to the presenters.
- The group hopes to achieve a sense as to the staffing, costs and potential pitfalls of this kind of initiative.
- Local hospitals are insisting that physicians credentialed to attend their practice at their hospitals. At this point, ninety percent of the attending physicians affiliated with local hospitals have computers. A much smaller number have computerized records.
VI. TOPIC: STOCKTON’S POTENTIAL ROLE

DISCUSSION:
Dr. Carr indicated that Stockton is in the process of developing a team to assess their capacity to lead this initiative. A current barrier is that some key Stockton players are not available to the university over the summer. Once the form a team, they will assess the availability of staff time to participate in this initiative as well as the expertise of different Stockton information system individuals and faculty members. He does not want Stockton to volunteer to undertake the leadership of an initiative without being confident that they have both the resources and the expertise to succeed. Dr. Carr indicated that Stockton would be able to make a decision regarding their continued participation by September.

Stockton also agreed to take the following steps:

- To host a website to facilitate participants in this process in Atlantic County’s sharing of information.
- To initiate a grant search to try to find resources to support this effort.
- To work with the committee to determine what Stockton’s role will be in this effort. Clearly, system’s administration and monitoring will have a attending costs. The resources to meet these costs need to be identified as part of this process.

Once Stockton has completed its process, the Committee will re-convene in September.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Ruben

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