

# **SOUTHERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION**

Gulf Coast Health Information  
Technology Task Force

Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas

# IMPETUS

- ◆ The catastrophic hurricanes of 2005 revealed how vulnerable medical record data is in the United States today.
- ◆ For the first time in U.S. history, medical professionals were faced with tens of thousands of evacuees who had little or no knowledge of their existing medical conditions or treatment regimen.
- ◆ In many cases, their health history has been lost forever.

# Emergency versus Catastrophe

- ◆ Hurricanes Katrina and Rita revealed to Gulf State Governors the difference between localized emergencies and unprecedented, regional catastrophes for which the health care delivery system was unprepared.
- ◆ Today, Governors seek to rebuild the system to respond to a catastrophe and the mass evacuation of hundreds of thousands of citizens.

# Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology

- ◆ Dr. David Brailer approached the Southern Governors' Association to convene a Task Force to define principles for an interoperable health information exchange network.
- ◆ Governors immediately recognized the opportunity to prepare the health care delivery system for a catastrophe.
- ◆ The Task Force will consist of providers, payers, consumer advocates, IT professionals, business leaders, and first responders who provided medical care to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

# Deliverables and Objectives

The SGA Gulf Coast Health Information Task Force will:

1. Conduct return on investment studies and review current state HIT efforts.
2. Develop a set of goals to guide the work of the Task Force.
3. Prepare a review of emerging national principles to guide state implementation.
4. Define a set of principles for the mobilization of health records.
5. Produce a communications plan to encourage support for adoption.

