SATVA and Interoperability Workgroup Forge Ahead and Welcomes SAMHSA Participation

For Immediate Release

(New York, NY – March 23, 2010) – The Software and Technology Vendors Association (SATVA) convened an exciting workshop meeting of the Behavioral Health Interoperability Workgroup on March 17, 2010 in Orlando Florida. The session included the participation of **Dr. H. Westley Clark**, Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA www.SAMHSA.gov).

The workgroup's goal is to advance interoperability in behavioral healthcare. The team is comprised of SATVA members and provider organization participants representing the Mental Health Corporation of America (MHCA) members and National Council for Community Behavioral Health. Don Hevey, President/CEO of MHCA also participated. Dr. Clark contributed to the group's work in refining plans for development of a Continuity of Care Document (CCD). The CCD is a ground breaking step for behavioral health that contributes to the quality of care of consumers and provides a method to demonstrate meaningful use of an electronic health record by 2011.

Provider organization leaders provided key feedback on the CCD data they felt was valuable as well as concerns about confidentiality. Dr. Clark offered important insights and encouragement for the group underscoring the critical nature of interoperability and clarifying the how data might be exchanged while still respecting privacy and confidentiality through the use of Qualified Service Organizations (QSO's). After the meeting Dr. Clark said "I was pleased to drop in on the workgroup during the NCCBH Conference and look forward to SAMSHA's continued dialogue with the workgroup. I would like to thank the members of the group for their contribution to the topic of HIT in behavioral health as well as SATVA for establishing such a group."

Prior to the workgroup, SATVA coordinated the second demonstration of CCD data exchange by three member companies at the National Council's Annual Conference. This offered members the first glimpse of real time interoperability between multiple software vendors in the form of a CCD. A video of the presentation is available on the SATVA website at www.satva.org.

SATVA members are ensuring that key stakeholders understand the capabilities of available technology. They are also addressing key elements of the work including confidentiality, consent and transportation concerns as they relate to sending consumer data to other providers. Since the first CCD demonstration, the workgroup has gained a great deal of momentum and is continuing to attract attention.

"SATVA has partnered with MHCA and National Council on white papers and conference presentations; but this work we are doing will demonstrate the power of these organizations when they collaborate on a mission driven product such as interoperability". Bill Connors, MSW, SATVA Board Chairman

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