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## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release:** 11 July 2013

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### **Internet access at Idaho's libraries helps patients cross the digital divide**

BOISE, ID – As health system transformation gets underway, patients will begin to take a larger role in their own healthcare. Engaged patients are more likely to:

- participate in preventive and healthy practices,
- manage their conditions, and
- achieve better outcomes.

To support patient engagement, healthcare systems in Idaho are working to make health information available to patients electronically. A federal program that provides incentives to health care providers and hospitals to help them adopt electronic health records will begin requiring healthcare providers and hospitals to make health information available to patients online in 2014.

Not all Idahoans have a computer or Internet access in their homes. "Idaho's public libraries can play a critical role in helping Idaho residents cross the digital divide when it comes to accessing health information online," said State Librarian Ann Joslin. "The libraries have free Internet and public access computers. In many communities, this is the only free public Internet access available."

The Idaho Commission for Libraries has partnered with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, the Idaho Primary Care Association, the Idaho Hospital Association, and the Idaho Academy of Family Physicians to develop a "Get Connected" bookmark that lets patients know what resources are available at Idaho's libraries and encourages them to access those resources to take an active role in their own health. The bookmarks will be distributed to Idaho health care providers and hospitals. As the health care providers and hospitals begin to make patient information available online, they can give the bookmarks to patients to make them aware of the Internet access and resources available at the libraries.

See more at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/health-records-online>.

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele. To learn more about ICfL, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov>. The "Get Connected" bookmarks were funded through ICfL's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) "online @ your library" project. See more about "online @ your library" at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/online>.