

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Wide River TEC announces appointment of leadership staff**

Lincoln, Neb. – Wide River Technology Extension Center (Wide River TEC), Nebraska’s Regional Extension Center for Health Information Technology, is pleased to announce the appointment of two leadership staff. Dr. Bob Rauner has joined the newly-established organization as the Principal Clinical Coordinator. Todd Searls, most recently with National Jewish Health (NJH) in Denver, Colo., has been named the Director.

Dr. Rauner, originally from Sidney, Neb., has a BA in philosophy from Creighton University, a medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and completed a residency in family medicine at the Lincoln Family Medicine Program. His prior clinical practice includes five years as a rural family physician in Sidney and the last seven years as a faculty physician at the Lincoln Family Medicine Program. He recently completed a term as the president of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians. He will be finishing his master’s degree in public health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in May. Dr. Rauner stated, “I look forward to beginning this important work. Wide River TEC has tremendous potential to improve the healthcare for Nebraskans, working in collaboration with our numerous partners and supporters.”

Searls joins Wide River TEC after having spent the past several years as a Clinical Systems Supervisor at National Jewish Health. In this capacity, he served as the technical lead and coordinator for NJH’s Electronic Medical Record (EMR) implementation, heading a team of analysts who maintained the EMR build and hardware, while at the same time facilitating the adoption of the EMR for both the Divisions of Adult and Pediatric Medicine, totaling almost 200 physicians across 20+ specialties. Since 2001, Searls has implemented and advanced a host of healthcare IT initiatives through senior leadership positions in both independent provider-owned practices, as well as large multi-facility healthcare systems. “I am honored and pleased to accept the position of Director at Wide River TEC. With so many new federal regulations facing Nebraska physicians, my first priority will be to assist these providers in navigating the technical and regulatory challenges ahead, so they may continue to focus on what matters most – their patients,” stated Searls.

Regional Extension Centers were established as part of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act. CIMRO of Nebraska, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for the state of Nebraska, was awarded this four-year cooperative agreement grant from The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) to establish Wide River TEC to assist Nebraska healthcare providers with implementing and using EHRs. Wide River TEC will offer technical assistance, guidance and information on best practices to support and accelerate healthcare providers’ efforts to become meaningful users of EHRs, as well as the ability to exchange health information with other providers and agencies.

If you are a Nebraska practitioner interested in learning more about Wide River TEC’s services, visit the Wide River TEC Web site to download the commitment form at [www.widerivertec.org](http://www.widerivertec.org).

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