

525 Clinton Street
Bow, NH 03304
Voice: 603-228-2830
Fax: 603-228-2464



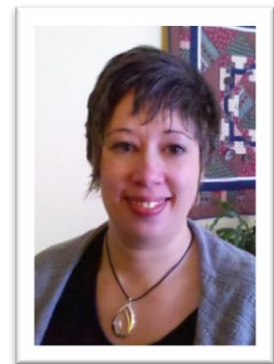
61 Elm Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Voice: 802-229-0002
Fax: 802-223-2336

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Susan Noon
603-228-2830 x 144

NEW EXPERTISE ON STAFF IN DATA SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

MONTPELIER, VT -- Heather E. Skeels, VT Program Coordinator for Bi-State Primary Care Association, recently completed a certificate program at Champlain College in "Data Systems and Technology." The program was created at the college in 2010 in response to the growing need for Health Information Technology (HIT) professionals to assist primary care practices, hospitals, and other medical professionals with the transition to electronic health records and with understanding new opportunities to improve care through health information exchange.



Heather E. Skeels

Ms. Skeels was the first graduate of the new program and completed her coursework in August 2011 with a 4.0 GPA. She gained expertise in the application of current laws and health information initiatives to ensure compliance and to protect data integrity; the support of database architecture to meet organizational needs; the coordination of data for health care decision making, quality management, and quality improvement; and the development and implementation of strategic and operational plans for HIT best practices.

Ms. Skeels coordinates Bi-State's VT Rural Health Alliance (VRHA) HIT Project, a statewide collaboration with the eight Federally Qualified Health Centers, VT Information Technology Leaders, the Department of VT Health Access, and other partners, to facilitate data integrity, health information exchange, and quality improvement activities. Bi-State received funding for the VRHA HIT Project by a grant of \$2.2M in June 2010 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Additional grant funding was provided by the Department of VT Health Access, in the amount of \$546,314.

Ms. Skeels is a resident of Northfield, VT, and has worked at Bi-State since 2002. She is currently enrolled in Bi-State's 2012 Leadership Development Program.

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