

Get the Facts about REGIONAL EXTENSION CENTERS

Improving the nation's health care through health information technology (health IT) is a major initiative for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and other HHS agencies are working together to assist health care providers with the adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records.

ONC has funded 62 Regional Extension Centers (RECs, pronounced R-E-Cs) to help more than 100,000 primary care providers meaningfully use electronic health records (EHRs). Eligible providers who adopt and meaningfully use EHRs may receive incentive payments through the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. Providers do not have to become technology experts to achieve meaningful use of EHRs; RECs will provide them with on-the-ground assistance.

REC services include outreach and education, EHR support (e.g., working with vendors, helping choose a certified EHR system), and technical assistance in implementing health IT and using it in a meaningful way to improve care.

RECs have received \$677 million for the next two years to support their work.

About the RECs

RECs represent a range of organizations that serve local communities throughout the country.

The RECs' focus is to provide on-the-ground assistance for:

- Individual and small practices, including primary care providers, physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners
- Medical practices lacking resources to implement and maintain EHRs
- Those who provide primary care services in public and critical access hospitals, community health centers, and other settings that mostly serve those who lack adequate coverage or medical care

About the Health Information Technology Research Center

The Health Information Technology Research Center (HITRC) has been funded with a \$50 million grant. The HITRC will assist the RECs in collaborating with one another and with other stakeholders to identify and share best practices for supporting health care providers in adopting and meaningfully using EHRs.

For More Information About:

The Regional Extension Centers, visit <http://healthit.hhs.gov/programs/REC>

The Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs, visit <http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms>

Health IT, visit <http://healthit.hhs.gov>

