

Get the Facts about BEACON COMMUNITY PROGRAM

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's Beacon Community Program will help guide the way to a transformed health care system. The program will fund more than a dozen demonstration communities that have already made inroads into the adoption of health information technology (health IT), including electronic health records and health information exchange. Beacon Communities will advance new, innovative ways to improve care coordination, improve the quality of care, and slow the growth of health care spending.

About the Beacon Communities

The goal of the Beacon Community Program is simple: to show how health IT tools and resources can contribute to communities' efforts to make breakthrough advancements in health care quality, safety, efficiency, and in public health at the community level and to demonstrate that these gains are sustainable and replicable.

In May 2010, ONC awarded 15 grants totaling \$220 million to communities across the country that are leading the way in health IT. Two additional grants totaling \$30 million were awarded in September 2010. Communities will use funding to:

- Build and strengthen their health IT infrastructure and exchange capabilities
- Demonstrate how meaningful use of electronic health records and health IT can lead to improvements in health care quality, reductions in unnecessary costs, and gains in public health
- Provide support and guidance to other communities for achieving meaningful use and measurable health care improvements and cost savings

Communities will work with other Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act programs, including the Regional Extension Center Program and State Health Information Exchange Program, to:

- Develop and disseminate best practices for adopting and using health IT to improve quality and cost outcomes
- Foster national goals for widespread meaningful use of health IT

The Beacon Community Program will also support the development of secure nationwide health information exchange strategies to improve the health care of all Americans.

The HITECH Act establishes programs to accelerate the meaningful use of health IT. The aim is to improve both the health of Americans and the performance of our nation's health care system.

For More Information About:

The Beacon Community Program, visit <http://healthit.hhs.gov/programs/beacon>

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

