The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

ADVANCING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE WITH ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS A LOOK AT ONC'S HITECH PROGRAMS

Under the 2009 Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has implemented robust programs to support health care providers in using electronic health records (EHRs):

- **Regional Extension Centers (RECs):** 62 RECs, located in every region of the country, are helping primary care providers adopt and meaningfully use EHRs. REC services include outreach and education, EHR support (e.g., working with vendors, helping choose a certified EHR system), and technical assistance in using EHRs to improve care.
- **Beacon Community Program:** The Beacon Community Program has funded 17 selected communities that have already made inroads into the adoption of health information technology (health IT), including EHRs and health information exchange. Beacon Communities are deploying health IT-enabled interventions to help providers and patients achieve improvements in quality, efficiency, and the overall health of their communities.
- **Health IT Workforce Development Program:** The goal of the Health IT Workforce Development Program is to train a new workforce of professionals to help providers implement EHRs. Four workforce initiatives support training and certification of skilled workers:
  - Community college non-degree training programs
  - Development of high-quality educational materials
  - A competency exam program to evaluate trainee knowledge and skills
  - University-based training programs for highly specialized health IT roles
- **State Health Information Exchange (HIE) Program:** The State HIE Program funds states' efforts to rapidly increase connectivity and enable the secure flow of patient-centric information across the health care system—within and across states. Demonstrating the secure sharing of information among providers is an essential part of using EHRs in a meaningful way.
- **Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) Program:** The SHARP program supports the discovery of "breakthrough" research findings that will accelerate the nationwide use of health IT. SHARP program awardees are working with technology developers, vendors, and health care providers to apply their findings to the practice of medicine.

These ONC-funded HITECH programs will help make it possible for providers to achieve meaningful use and for Americans to benefit from EHRs as part of a modernized, interconnected, and vastly improved system of care delivery.

For More Information About:

ONC Health IT Programs, visit http://healthit.hhs.gov/programs

The Recovery Act at HHS, visit http://hhs.gov/recovery

ONC is working with agencies across the federal government to advance the nation's health through EHRs while safeguarding patient privacy. Key partners within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services include:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms

HHS Office for Civil Rights http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy

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