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New Mexico Providers Benefiting from NM HITREC's EHR Support Services

NM HITREC is helping healthcare providers in small practices select, implement, and meaningfully use EHRs to qualify for federal incentives.

In the last several months, the New Mexico Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (NM HITREC) has enrolled more than 700 priority primary care providers to receive technical assistance to become meaningful users of electronic health records (EHRs). The majority of the providers signed up to receive NM HITREC support are affiliated with small private practices of 10 or fewer providers or community health centers.

"It is encouraging to see the enthusiastic response among New Mexico primary care providers to the Regional Extension Center initiative," said Maggie Gunter, PhD, LCF Research president and executive director. "We are well aware of the challenges providers face in EHR adoption and reaching meaningful use, and we are pleased to be working with them to overcome these challenges and to qualify for the federal financial incentives."

NM HITREC, the designated organization for New Mexico, expects to enroll a total of 1,035 qualified providers by the end of 2011 to help ease this transition to EHRs. NM HITREC offer healthcare providers a local resource for technical assistance, guidance, and information on best practices to support and accelerate provider efforts to become meaningful users of EHRs. NM HITREC is led by Albuquerque non-profit LCF Research and its partners, the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA) and the New Mexico Primary Care Association (NMPCA).

Currently, NM HITREC is waiving enrollment fees for a limited time to provide services at no cost to qualifying primary care providers (such as family practice, general internal medicine, ob-gyn and pediatrics) in small practices or those serving rural and medically underserved areas. NM HITREC will assist practices with and without existing EHR systems. However, to obtain NM HITREC assistance, practices must commit to purchasing and using their EHR systems to achieve meaningful use.

NM HITREC works with area providers on HIT education and training, vendor selection, financial consultation and workflow redesign, among others. Ultimately, NM HITREC aims to help providers achieve EHR meaningful use objectives from the very beginning while maximizing EHR adoption incentives and minimizing financial and administrative burdens associated with implementing new electronic systems.

Eligible practices are encouraged to act now and take advantage of NM HITREC's expertise in providing scalable solutions for achieving EHR meaningful use, which is the foundation of successful EHR implementation. The federal government is committing unprecedented resources to supporting the adoption and meaningful use of EHRs, and this funding provides important support to achieve liftoff for the creation of electronic networks across the nation, connecting EHR systems to facilitate coordination and improvement of patient care and efficiency. Specifically, incentive payments totaling up to \$44,000 (through Medicare) or \$63,750 (through Medicaid) per eligible provider are being made available to clinicians who demonstrate meaningful use of EHRs.

"This is the perfect time for providers to sign up for NM HITREC assistance, since the "early birds" who achieve meaningful use soon will qualify for the full federal financial incentives," said Gunter.

For more information or to enroll to participate with NM HITREC, visit www.nmhitrec.org or (505) 938-9900.

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