

MORE THAN 17,000 HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS ENLIST WITH HEALTH IT REGIONAL EXTENSION CENTERS FOR SUPPORT ON ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Wide River TEC Advancing Nebraska's Transition from Paper Charts

Nov. 9, 2010 - In the last several months, some 62 organizations designated as Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers (REC) around the country have collectively enrolled more than 17,000 primary care providers to receive support on becoming meaningful users of electronic health records (EHRs). The majority of the providers signed up to receive REC support are affiliated with small private practices (35%) or community health centers (34%), with many specializing in family practice or internal medicine (see figure 1 below).

Wide River Technology Extension Center (TEC), the designated organization for Nebraska, is currently working with 262 providers to help ease this transition to EHRs. Wide River TEC serves in an advisory role, bringing local expertise and support to primary care physicians and other healthcare providers with necessary technical assistance for successful EHR implementation. Wide River TEC also serves as a direct pipeline to the national health information technology (health IT) adoption program in support of individual primary care practices, critical access hospitals (CAHs) and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

“Primary care providers, who are really the cornerstone of healthcare in this country, are presented with unique and complex challenges when it comes to implementing EHRs,” said Todd Searls, Director of Wide River TEC. “We know it’s difficult and we’re passionate about helping these clinicians throughout the entire process, and at any point along the way. We share the same goal with our provider partners – to ensure the highest quality of care for patients and to optimize overall productivity and quality of work-life balance for providers and their staffs.”

Primary healthcare providers are essential to the health of the country, working on the front lines to prevent disease, detect it early and manage conditions before they become severe. The integration of health IT into medical practices will improve quality and care coordination for patients everywhere they receive health care. Providers face many challenges when approaching EHR implementation and Wide River TEC’s priority is supporting providers in taking advantage of the full benefits of EHRs.

Wide River TEC works with area providers in the areas of HIT education and training, vendor selection, financial consultation and workflow redesign, among others. Ultimately, Wide River TEC 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.

“My experience with Wide River TEC has been very positive,” said Robert Beer, MD, West Omaha Family Physicians, PC. “The expertise and availability of the individuals at Wide River TEC provides a valuable resource, at an affordable price, for smaller medical practices looking for EHR solutions. “

Medical practices are encouraged to act now and take advantage of Wide River TEC’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 a nationwide electronically-enabled health care system. Specifically, incentive payments totaling up to \$44,000 (through Medicare) or \$63,750 (through Medicaid) per eligible provider are being made available to clinicians that demonstrate meaningful use of EHRs.

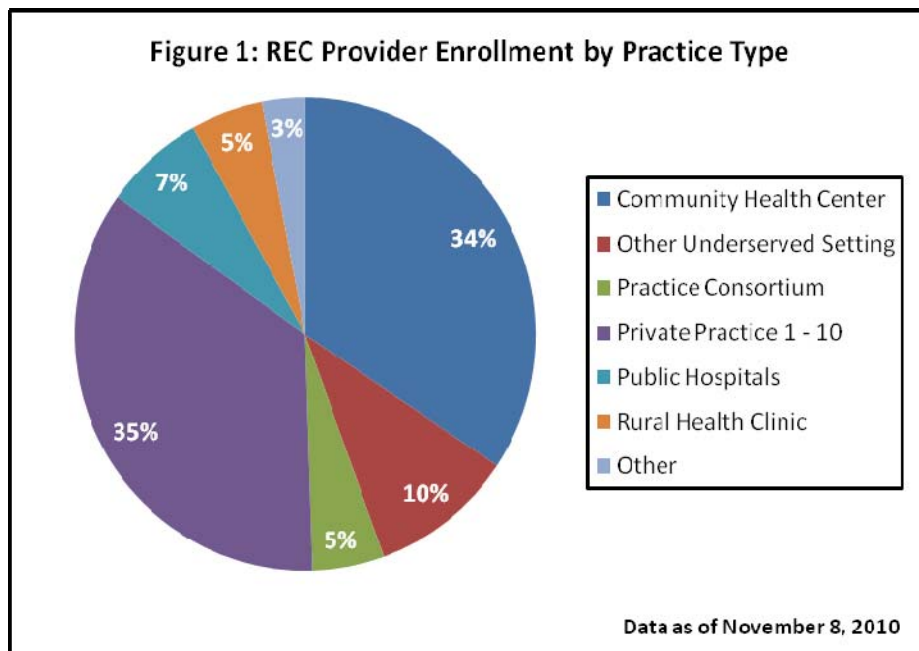
Through an objective review process by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC), Wide River TEC received a cooperative grant award to serve as the designated organization in Nebraska to support primary healthcare providers on EHR adoption and meaningful use.

If you are a Nebraska practitioner interested in learning more about Wide River TEC's services, visit the Wide River TEC Web site at www.widerivertec.org.

Additional Resources

[HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT](#)

[Health IT Journey: Stories from the Road](#)



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