

Overview

National Initiative

The national Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act authorizes a Health Information Technology Extension Program, which consists of Regional Extension Centers and a national Health Information Technology Research Center. This effort is part of the Health Information Technology Extension Program established through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

Nebraska Efforts

Wide River Technology Extension Center (TEC) headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, was awarded the Regional Extension Center contract for the state of Nebraska in February 2010. Wide River TEC operates as a separate business unit within CIMRO of Nebraska, the Nebraska Medicare Quality Improvement Organization. CIMRO of Nebraska manages and oversees functions of Wide River TEC.

Wide River TEC offers technical assistance, guidance and information on best practices to support and accelerate healthcare providers' efforts to become meaningful users of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), as well as the ability to exchange health information with other providers and agencies. Achieving this goal, enables primary care providers to become eligible for bonus payments for their Medicare and Medicaid patients.

Technical Support and Services

Services offered by Wide River TEC are available to all providers, including those who already have an EHR in place and those that do not. Priority will be given to Nebraska practitioners providing primary care in individual and small group practices, Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs), Rural Health Clinics and other settings that serve uninsured, underinsured and medically underserved populations. Technical assistance and support will focus on the following areas:

- ❖ Select and purchase EHR software
- ❖ Practice and workflow redesign
- ❖ EHR and project management support
- ❖ Functional interoperability and health information exchange assessment and guidance
- ❖ Privacy and security best practices
- ❖ EHR optimization and meaningful use

Individualized education and training will be conducted through onsite visits and individualized technical assistance. A team approach will be utilized, with highly-trained nursing informatics and technical specialists providing technical assistance. Wide River TEC will build on and expand the work Nebraska healthcare providers are already deeply engaged in. Partnering organizations have successful track records in HIT education, training and technical assistance. Building on current efforts in Nebraska, Wide River TEC will help advance the emerging e-health infrastructure.

Similar Efforts in Other Areas

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has funded 62 RECs in virtually every geographic region of the United States to ensure plenty of support to healthcare providers in communities across the country. The HITECH Act authorizes a Health Information Technology Extension Program. The extension program consists of Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers and a national Health Information Technology Research Center (HITRC). The HITRC will gather information on effective practices and help the RECs work with one another and with relevant stakeholders to identify and share best practices in EHR adoption, meaningful use and provider support.

Measuring Success

The primary measure of Wide River TEC's effectiveness will be the number of assisted providers who become meaningful users of certified EHRs. During the first two years of the project period, Wide River TEC plans to assist 1,200 Nebraska practitioners to achieve that goal. As of November 2011, over 800 Nebraska providers are being assisted by Wide River TEC to successfully select, install and meaningfully use their EHR. Services will also be provided to those not identified as priority providers, such as specialists, hospitals, long-term care and others; leading to a self-sustaining enterprise.

Contact Us

**For more information about Wide River TEC, contact a member of our staff at
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Or visit www.widerivertec.org.**

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