

## NC AHEC

**Project Title:** HIT Extension Program--Regional Centers Cooperative Agreement Program

**Service Area:** State of North Carolina, including all 100 counties. USPS zip-three codes: 270-289, 297.

**Applicant Name:** The North Carolina Area Health Education Centers Program located within the UNC, Chapel Hill.

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Under the leadership of the North Carolina AHEC Program, located at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina will establish a comprehensive regional extension center (REC) to support primary care providers in adopting electronic health records (EHRs) and utilizing health information technology effectively to improve the quality of health care throughout the state. NC AHEC will use its existing regional infrastructure to hire and train over 40 new positions in nine regions across the state to provide on-site technical assistance to primary care providers.

The new Regional Extension Center will work collaboratively with the new Health Information Exchange initiative to more effectively utilize health information technology to enhance care. The NC AHEC REC will provide primary care practices and providers with on-site assistance in the areas of practice workflow and redesign, EHR selection and implementation, functional interoperability and health information exchange, and privacy and security training to achieve meaningful use and improve care outcomes. NC AHEC REC will also offer the opportunity to group purchase approved EHR products. Finally, NC AHEC REC will participate in a National Learning Consortium to help meet national objectives for widespread EHR adoption and meaningful use.

NC AHEC will draw on the expertise of four partners who add particular strengths to the REC effort: The Carolina Center for Medical Excellence (CCME), the North Carolina Medical Society Foundation (NCMSF), the UNC Institute for Public Health, and Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC). Over the span of two years, NC AHEC REC will assist at least 3,465 primary care providers with EHR adoption and

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optimization. Education, library, and quality improvement assistance will be provided to more than 6,300 providers across the state.

The project will be led by Dr. Tom Bacon, AHEC Program Director and Dr. Sam Cykert, Associate Professor of Medicine at UNC and Program Director for Internal Medicine at Moses Cone Hospital and Greensboro AHEC. Ms. Ann Lefebvre, AHEC Associate Director for Statewide Quality Improvement, will serve as the Executive Director for the REC.

"Improving the way health information is exchanged among medical providers is vital to a quality and efficient health care system," said North Carolina Governor Bev Perdue. "This technology will help give doctors and other health care providers the information they need to provide better patient care."

"Investing in health information technologies, like electronic health record keeping, will both cut costs and improve quality of care," North Carolina Senator Kay Hagan said. "By giving providers the ability to share x-rays and scans more easily and turn paper charts into electronic records, we will reduce the need for multiple tests. These grants will facilitate and encourage North Carolina's health professionals to implement health information technology in order to provide more cost effective, better quality care to citizens across all 100 counties in the state."

"The North Carolina AHEC Program is delighted to be taking the lead on the Regional Extension Center for North Carolina. Working with our collaborators, we look forward to supporting the primary care providers in the state as they take advantage of new technologies including electronic health records to enhance their practice, improve health outcomes and better serve the people of North Carolina," said NC AHEC Director Tom Bacon.

The long-term vision of NC AHEC REC is to develop a robust HIT environment based in quality improvement that engages consumers, expands information sharing among key users including primary care providers, consultants, care managers, hospitals, pharmacies, and labs, and informs clinical decision making across multiple disciplines and from all practice settings.

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North Carolina Receives \$26.5 Million For Health IT

Federal Recovery Funds To Develop Health Information  
Infrastructure

RALEIGH -- Gov. Bev Perdue announced today that North Carolina has been awarded \$26.5 million dollars in federal recovery funds to facilitate health information exchange at the state level and to aid health professionals as they work to implement and use health information technology.

"Improving the way health information is exchanged among medical providers is vital to a quality and efficient health care system," said Gov. Perdue. "This technology will help give doctors and other health care providers the information they need to provide better patient care."

The North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund will receive \$12.9 million to facilitate Health Information Exchange in the state. In July 2009, Gov. Perdue signed an executive order charging the HWTF as the State Designated Entity responsible for coordinating the state's health IT recovery efforts. The Governor also formed the North Carolina Health Information Technology Collaborative within HWTF to lead the efforts to develop the state's strategic plan. The funds can be used for both planning and implementation to advance appropriate and secure health information exchange across the health care system which will lead to better and more efficient patient care.

In addition, \$13.6 million has been awarded to the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers Program (AHEC) located at UNC-Chapel Hill. NC AHEC will establish a comprehensive regional extension center to provide training and technical support for primary care providers using electronic health records. NC AHEC will use its existing regional infrastructure to hire and train more than 40 new positions in nine regions across the state to provide on-site technical assistance to primary care providers.

The new Regional Extension Center will work collaboratively with the new Health Information Exchange initiative to more effectively utilize health information technology to enhance care.