

**Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act**  
*Programs and Grants in Suburban Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia*

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Health information technology has enormous potential to improve patients' healthcare experience and health outcomes. Electronic health records (EHRs) keep consistent records of patient histories, while improving clinical workflow. Health information exchanges and personal health records ensure EHRs' completeness, allowing doctors, specialty care providers, and patients to review and add to medical histories. Better record keeping and richer medical histories, in turn, guide providers to make the most informed clinical decisions for their patients' health. Furthermore, electronic data lets us chart metrics for a clinical subpopulation, a clinic, and larger subpopulations that can paint a picture of our nation's health and drive healthcare improvement.

The federal government sought to jump-start health information technology adoption through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, a portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. HITECH provides stimulus funds for:

- Medicaid/Medicare incentive payments: to ensure that HIT enhances the patient experience, and pre-empt a technology gap based on patient income level, by encouraging practices serving Medicare and Medicaid patients to adopt EHRs and meet "meaningful use" standards;
- Regional extension centers: to assist providers in adoption and meaningful use of EHRs;
- Health information exchanges: to enable hospitals, labs, and specialty care providers who have adopted EHRs to exchange patient information consistently and securely, in order to guide clinical decision-making and improve timeliness of care;
- Beacon communities: to ask leaders in health information technology to share best practices, continue to lead, and inspire the nation;
- Workforce development programs: to build the workforce of 50,000 health information technology professionals necessary to meet the demands of HIT adoption, to make HIT adoption sustainable; and
- Strategic health IT advanced research project programs: to continually explore HIT's potential to practically improve healthcare quality and cost in the United States through research.

The following chart provides an overview of HITECH Act programs and grants awarded in the region:

HITECH Program	Purpose	Action	Funding	Grants in the Region
<p>Medicaid/ Medicare incentive payments based on fulfillment of “meaningful use” standards<sup>1,2,3,4</sup></p>	<p>Reduce health disparities in HIT adoption and ensure that HIT adoption enhances quality of care by incentivizing meaningful adoption of EHRs by clinics serving Medicare and Medicaid patient populations<sup>1,2,3,4</sup></p>	<p>Incentive payments over 4 years for providers and hospitals who serve a certain percentage of Medicare or Medicaid patients<sup>2</sup> and fulfill federal “meaningful use” requirements<sup>1</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to \$44,000 per Medicare provider over 5 years; Medicare reimbursement cut for those who do not adopt by 2015, beginning in May 2011<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Up to \$63,750 per Medicaid provider over 6 years, beginning in May 2011<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Incentive payments for hospitals, with a \$2 million base payment, beginning in May 2011<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Regional Extension Centers<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10</sup></p>	<p>Assist providers in selecting, implementing, and meaningfully using EHRs to qualify for Medicaid/Medicare incentive payments<sup>5,6,7</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish 60 Regional Extension Centers to provide EHR adoption education, outreach, and technical assistance to over 100,000 providers over two years<sup>5,6</sup></li> <li>• Establish a national Health Information Technology Research Center (HITRC) to facilitate learning among all Regional Extension Centers<sup>5,6</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$642 million for 60 Regional Extension Centers, awarded in 2010<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• \$50 million for the Health Information Technology Research Center<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5.4 million<sup>5</sup> to the DC Primary Care Association<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• \$5.5 million<sup>5</sup> to the Chesapeake Regional Information System for Our Patients<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• \$12.4 million<sup>5</sup> to the Virginia Health Quality Center<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>

HITECH Program	Purpose	Action	Funding	Grants in the Region
Health Information Exchanges <sup>11,12,13,14,15,16,17</sup>	Build regional health information exchanges for patient EMRs, to improve timeliness and quality of care <sup>11,12,13,14,15</sup>	Issue State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreements that increase patient information flow to improve quality of care, allowing for continual evolution of governance, policies, technical services, business operations, and financing mechanisms for HIE over a 4-year performance period <sup>11,12</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$548 million for 56 states, eligible territories, and qualified State Designated Entities, awarded in 2010<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5.1 million<sup>11</sup> to the DC Dept. of Health Care Finance, allocated to the DC Primary Care Association<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• \$9.3 million<sup>11</sup> to the Maryland Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, allocated to the Chesapeake Regional Information System for Our Patients<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• \$11.6 million<sup>11</sup> to the Virginia Dept. of Health<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>
Beacon Communities <sup>18,19</sup>	Encourage communities that are already at the forefront of HIT adoption to continue to demonstrate cutting-edge HIT practices that can serve as a model for communities nationwide <sup>18,19</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use HIT to achieve specific and sustainable quality, efficiency, and population health goals identified by each community</li> <li>• Coordinate with state HIEs and RECs in their areas as well as HITRC to develop and disseminate best practices for healthcare improvement and inform national HIT goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$250 million for 17 beacon communities nationwide, awarded in 2010<sup>18</sup></li> </ul>	N/A

HITECH Program	Purpose	Action	Funding	Grants in the Region
<p>Workforce Development Program:<sup>20,21,22,23,24,25,26</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community College Consortia to Educate Health IT Professionals<sup>21</sup></li> <li>• Curriculum Development Centers Program<sup>22</sup></li> <li>• Program of Assistance for University-based Training<sup>23</sup></li> <li>• Competency Examination Program<sup>24</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Build a health information technology professional workforce to support nationwide health information technology infrastructure<sup>20</sup></p>	<p><u>Community College Consortia to Educate Health IT Professionals</u>                      Train more than 10,500 new health IT professionals annually by 2012 through offering non-degree health IT training programs that students can complete in 6 months or less at community colleges in the Community College Consortia, 5 regional groups of more than 70 member community colleges in all 50 states<sup>21</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$36 million awarded to 5 community colleges to support 5 regional community college consortia of 70 total members<sup>21</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community College of DC and Northern Virginia Community College are members of a regional consortium headed by Tidewater Community College in Virginia<sup>21,25,26</sup></li> </ul>
		<p><u>Curriculum Development Centers Program</u>                      Develop curricula for health IT curricula implemented by the Community College Consortia, as well as a National Training and Dissemination Center for in-person training, maintenance of an online site, and program evaluation<sup>22</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$10 million for 5 higher education institutions, awarded in 2010<sup>22</sup></li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>
		<p><u>Program of Assistance for University-based Training</u>                      Establish training programs in universities for specific health information technology roles of clinician/public health leader, health information management and exchange specialist, health information privacy and security specialist, research and development scientist, programmers and software engineering, and health IT sub-specialist.<sup>23</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$32 million for 9 colleges and universities, awarded in 2010<sup>23</sup></li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>

HITECH Program	Purpose	Action	Funding	Grants in the Region
		<p><u>Competency Examination Program</u>                      Develop HIT competency examinations to guide curriculum development, for short-duration, non-degree HIT programs, and for workers with relevant experience or other types of training<sup>24</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6 million single, 2-year cooperative agreement to a higher education institution, awarded in 2010<sup>24</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6 million single, two-year cooperative agreement awarded to Northern Virginia Community<sup>24,26</sup></li> </ul>
<p>Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Project Programs<sup>27,28</sup></p>	<p>Innovate strategies to address current and future HIT challenges<sup>27,28</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around each of 4 HIT issues, perform interdisciplinary research and guide transition of findings to practice through cooperation among researchers, industry, healthcare providers, and others.<sup>27,28</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Security of patient records</li> <li>○ Patient-centered cognitive support for physicians</li> <li>○ Healthcare application and network platform architectures</li> <li>○ Secondary use of EHR data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$60 million to 4 higher education institutions to do research in each of 4 areas, awarded in 2010<sup>27</sup></li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>

With federal and state grants, the metropolitan Washington safety net has been working hard to forge a system that gives patients and healthcare facilities access to the benefits of health information technology. Read more about how the metropolitan DC safety net has been facilitating EMR adoption in clinics and health information exchange at <http://regionalprimarycare.org/health-information-technology/regional-work.aspx>.

## RESOURCES

For further resources on health information technology, please visit: <http://www.regionalprimarycare.org/health-information-technology/web-sites.aspx>

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### Medicaid/Medicare Incentive Programs

- <sup>1</sup> *Overview, EHR Incentive Programs*, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2010. <https://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/>
- <sup>2</sup> *Whitepaper: A Summary of the HITECH Act*, athenahealth, Inc., 2009. [http://www.athenahealth.com/doc/pdf/HITECH\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Whitepaper.pdf](http://www.athenahealth.com/doc/pdf/HITECH_Fact_Sheet_Whitepaper.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> *Unravelling EHR Certification*, HITECH Act Help, 2010. <http://hitechacthelp.com/2010/06/23/unravelling-ehr-certification/>
- <sup>4</sup> *The "Meaningful Use" Regulation for Electronic Health Records*, The New England Journal of Medicine, 2010. <http://healthpolicyandreform.nejm.org/?p=3732>

### Regional Extension Centers

- <sup>5</sup> *Health Information Technology Extension Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010. [http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_rec\\_program/1495](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_rec_program/1495)
- <sup>6</sup> *Get the Facts about Regional Extension Centers*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010. <http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&mode=2&objID=1835>
- <sup>7</sup> *Regional Extension Center Overview*, HITECH Act Help, 2010. <http://hitechacthelp.com/2010/04/08/rec-overview/>
- <sup>8</sup> eHealthDC, 2010. <http://ehealthdc.org/>
- <sup>9</sup> *Programs*, Chesapeake Regional Information System for Our Patients, 2010. <http://www.crisphealth.org/Programs/tabid/151/Default.aspx>
- <sup>10</sup> *Virginia HIT Regional Extension Center*, Virginia Health Quality Center, 2010. <http://www.vhqc.org/custom-hit.asp>

### Health Information Exchanges

- <sup>11</sup> *State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator Health Information Technology, 2010. [http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_state\\_health\\_information\\_exchange\\_program/1488](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_state_health_information_exchange_program/1488)
- <sup>12</sup> *Get the Facts about State Health Information Exchange Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010. <http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&mode=2&objID=1834>
- <sup>13</sup> *Requirements and Recommendations for the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator Health Information Technology, 2010. [http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_5545\\_1488\\_17157\\_43/http%3B/wci-pubcontent/publish/onc/public\\_communities/a\\_e/arra/state\\_hie\\_program\\_portlet/files/state\\_hie\\_program\\_information\\_notice\\_final.pdf](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_5545_1488_17157_43/http%3B/wci-pubcontent/publish/onc/public_communities/a_e/arra/state_hie_program_portlet/files/state_hie_program_information_notice_final.pdf)
- <sup>14</sup> *State HIE Toolkit*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010. <http://statehieresources.org/>
- <sup>15</sup> *Preparing to Implement HITECH: A State Guide for Electronic Health Information Exchange*, State Alliance for e-Health, National Governors Association, 2009. <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0908ehealthhitech.pdf>
- <sup>16</sup> *Enhancing Communication across the Healthcare System*, DC Primary Care Association, 2010. <http://www.dcpca.org/initiatives/enhancing-communication-healthcare-system/>
- <sup>17</sup> *State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreements Program*, Health Information Technology Spotlight, Official Website of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 2010. <http://www.hits.virginia.gov/HIE.shtml>

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**Beacon Community Program**

<sup>18</sup> *Beacon Community Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

[http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov onc beacon communities program improving health through health it/1805](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov onc beacon communities program improving health through health it/1805)

<sup>19</sup> *Get the Facts about the Beacon Community Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

<http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&mode=2&objID=1933>

**Workforce Development Program**

<sup>20</sup> *Get the Facts about Health IT Workforce Development Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

<http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=1432&mode=2>

<sup>21</sup> *Community College Consortia to Educate Health Information Technology Professionals in Health Care Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010. [http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_community\\_college\\_program/1804](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_community_college_program/1804)

<sup>22</sup> *Curriculum Development Centers Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

[http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_curriculum\\_development\\_program/1807](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_curriculum_development_program/1807)

<sup>23</sup> *Program of Assistance for University-Based Training*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

[http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_university-based\\_training\\_program/1808](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_university-based_training_program/1808)

<sup>24</sup> *Competency Examination Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

[http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_competency\\_examination\\_program %282%29/1809](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_competency_examination_program%282%29/1809)

<sup>25</sup> *Workforce Development Program*, Community College of DC, 2010. [http://www.ccdc.usdc.edu/workforce\\_development](http://www.ccdc.usdc.edu/workforce_development)

<sup>26</sup> *Information Systems*, Northern Virginia Community College, 2010. <http://www.nvcc.edu/campuses-and-centers/medical/academic-divisions/his/index.html>

**Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects Program**

<sup>27</sup> *Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010.

[http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit\\_hhs\\_gov\\_sharp\\_program/1806](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/healthit_hhs_gov_sharp_program/1806)

<sup>28</sup> *Get the Facts about Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) Program*, The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, 2010. <http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=1438&mode=2&cached=true>