

[HHS Home](#) > [ASPA](#) > [Newsroom](#) > News Releases

Newsroom

News Releases

Speeches & Op-eds

Testimony

Reports

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Photo/Image Gallery

E-mail Updates/RSS Feeds

Contacts

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: HHS Press Office
(202) 690-6343

HHS Announces \$267 Million in Recovery Act Funds for New Health IT Regional Extension Centers

Grants to Provide Hands-On, Community-Based Support to Providers to Accelerate the Adoption of Health Information Technology

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced today that more than \$267 million has been awarded to [28 additional non-profit organizations](#) to establish Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers (RECs). This investment, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will help grow the emerging health information technology (health IT) industry which is expected to support tens of thousands of jobs ranging from nurses and pharmacy techs to IT technicians and trainers.

RECs enable health care practitioners to reach out to a local resource for technical assistance, guidance, and information on best practices. RECs are designed to address unique community requirements and to support and accelerate provider efforts to become meaningful users of electronic health records.

"Health care in our country is community-based. Today's awards represent our ongoing commitment to make sure that health providers have the necessary support within their communities to maximize the use of health IT to improve the care they provide to their patients," said Secretary Sebelius.

This round of awards, bringing the total number of REC's to 60, will provide nationwide outreach and technical support services to at least 100,000 primary care providers and hospitals within two years. The primary care provider is usually the first medical practitioner contacted by a patient. Studies have also found that primary care providers are at the forefront of practicing preventative medicine, a key to improving population health and reducing overall health costs. More than \$375 million had been awarded earlier to RECs under this program.

Additionally, all REC awardees, those announced today and the 32 announced on Feb. 12, 2010, now have an opportunity to apply for a two-year expansion supplemental award. The supplemental awards would ensure that health IT support services are available to over 2,000 of the nation's critical access hospitals and rural hospitals, both defined as having 50 beds or less. Approximately \$25 million is available through this supplemental expansion program.

"Regional extension centers will provide the needed hands-on, field support for all health care providers to advance the rapid adoption and use of health IT. RECs are a vital part of our overall efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of health care through the effective use of health IT," said Dr. David Blumenthal, national coordinator for health information technology.

Today's awards are part of the \$2 billion effort by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to achieve widespread meaningful use of health IT and provide use of an electronic health record by every person by the year 2014.

Learn More:

- [Today's Awardees](#)
- Complete listing of REC grant recipients and additional information about the Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers, see <http://HealthIT.hhs.gov/programs/REC/>.
- For information about other HHS Recovery Act programs, see <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/>

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

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