

The following newsletter will be sent weekly, and include the latest information on health information technology and the federal stimulus funding.

The newsletter is organized as follows:

- Update
- Word on the Street
- Timeline
- Resources

All old newsletters can be found on the website.

If you have any questions/comments about the content of the newsletter please direct your inquiry to Andie Martinez, Associate Director of Policy at amartinez@cpc.org.

Update

- I. Electronic Health Records and Meaningful Use
- II. Health Information Exchange
- III. Regional Extension Center
- IV. EHR Loan Fund
- V. Workforce
- VI. Telehealth and Broadband

I. Electronic Health Records and Meaningful Use

Federal: The Office of the National Coordinator has forwarded the policy committee's recommendations on the second iteration on meaningful use to CMS. CMS is expected to release their version of meaningful use in December 2009. There is expected to be a 60-day comment period following CMS' release of the meaningful use definition.

State: The state Medicaid Directors have authority to determine how the definition of meaningful use is applied in their states. According to the CMS HIT implementation plan: "Medicaid providers must demonstrate 'meaningful use' as defined by the State and approved by the Secretary and may be based upon the methodologies applied for professionals and hospitals receiving EHR incentive payments under Medicare. Such meaningful use may include the reporting of clinical quality measures to the States and in such case, address populations with unique needs, like children."

CPCA is in communication with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and specifically Toby Douglas (California's Medicaid Director) about what the definition of meaningful use should look like for community clinics and health centers to be successful in implementing and operating EHRs.

CPCA: CPCA, with the guidance of the CPCA EHR workgroup, submitted comments on the first definition of meaningful use. CPCA's EHR workgroup will reconvene in December to respond to CMS' definition of meaningful use.

CPCA's EHR workgroup is chaired by Dean Germano, CEO of Shasta Community Health Center. The workgroup is open to any CPCA members, from front desk staff to CEOs. If you are interested in participating, contact Andie Martinez, Associate Director of Policy (amartinez@cpca.org).

General: The first dollars for the EHR incentives under Medicaid will not be released until at least January 2011. The first year of funding will be available without proving meaningful use. Any incentive funding received thereafter, will require proof of meaningful use.

II. Health Information Exchange

Federal: The Office of the National Coordinator and a couple other federal agencies have approximately \$2 billion to disperse to a number of projects, one of which is funding for HIE. States will be asked to apply for funding for planning and construction of health information exchanges (HIE). Guidelines for these funds are thought to be released Fall 2009.

State: The state of California has organized an HIE Advisory Board, under the authority of Secretary of HHS Kim Belshe, and management of Jonah Frohlich, Deputy Secretary of HIT. CPCA's CEO/President, Carmella Castellano-Garcia is a member of the Board. The charge of the HIE Advisory Board is to help the state determine whether or not the state should apply for the HIE funding directly or appoint a state-designated entity. Currently, the state is leaning towards the state-designated entity.

Jonah Frohlich is overseeing the state's HIT efforts, including the HIE Advisory Board, and all the associated workgroups (e.g. Workforce, EHR Loan Fund, R & D, etc.). All of the work group and advisory board efforts are being compiled into one California State HIT Strategic Plan that will be submitted to the Federal Government in early September. Submission of this plan is necessary for the state to apply for any HIT stimulus funding.

CPCA: CPCA's HIE workgroup, chaired by Ralph Silber, CEO of the Alameda Health Consortium, has drafted the *White Paper: What Community Clinics and Health Centers Need for Successful Health Information Exchange in California*. The White Paper is intended for Carmela's advocacy on the HIE Advisory Board to influence the infrastructure and governance of the statewide HIE.

At the direction of the HIE workgroup, CPCA has organized other safety net provider organizations to form the California Safety Net Coalition (CSNC). This Coalition provides a unified voice for the safety net provider community on decisions and activities regarding the California State HIT Strategic Plan and the activities stemming from the Plan, including those outlined by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. CSNC's objectives are to advocate for the safety net providers in California on issues of health information technology, provide clear position statements regarding

the needs of safety net providers to meet meaningful use criteria, disseminate appropriate HIT-related information to the safety net provider community, and support a safety-net governed regional extension center in California.

The CSNC has built upon CPCA's HIE White Paper, to draft one for the safety net. The safety net HIE principles will be finalized the week of August 10.

III. Regional Extension Center

Federal: In June the ONC released initial guidelines on the Regional Extension Centers (RECs). They are currently reviewing the feedback from stakeholders and are expected to release an RFP in late August or September.

There are expected to be approximately 10 RECs funded throughout the country, and there is no clear language indicating how RECs will be dispersed throughout the nation. RECs will receive between \$1- 10 million in funding, and are expected to provide a 100% match. The work plan of the RECs is to assist providers select EHRs, implement EHRs, and ensure providers meet meaningful use guidelines.

State: One of the many workgroups under Jonah Frohlich's guidance is a REC workgroup. With the workgroups assistance, the state has drafted a plan for the state's vision of what the REC will do and look like. This vision will be integrated into the state HIT strategic plan.

The state may not apply for REC funding directly, however they hope to influence which entity receives funding (if any) by endorsing a proposal. Applicants for the REC are encouraged to first submit their proposal to the state.

CPCA: CPCA's HIE workgroup is monitoring the state's REC workgroup. Additionally, CPCA with the California Medical Association and California Hospital Association are in conversation about forming a separate non-profit REC that will be governed by the safety net. The vision is to capitalize on the resources already in place with the regional consortia, and to expand the technical assistance capacity. The state of California is aware that CPCA is engaged in this activity, and further is supportive.

IV. EHR Loan Fund

Federal: Another sum of money under the discretion of the ONC is for an EHR Loan Fund. The federal government will provide \$5 for every \$1 a state provides for EHR loans to providers.

State: One of the workgroups under Jonah Frohlich's guidance is the EHR Loan Fund workgroup. Currently, California Health Facilities Finance Authority (CHFFA) will be the home for clinic EHR Loan Funds.

CPCA: CPCA staff is working with CHFFA staff to ensure that the funds are easily accessible to community clinics and health centers.

V. Workforce

No information at this time.

VI. Telehealth and Broadband

Federal: Through allocations from the federal stimulus, USDA Rural Utilities Services (RUS) is issuing Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broadband grants. There are \$2.5 billion for loans and grants for rural areas to access funding for broadband. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration also has stimulus funding for broadband, \$4.7 billion in the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

State: One of the many workgroups under Jonah Frohlich's guidance is the Telehealth and Broadband workgroup. The workgroup and state staff have been working with the California Telehealth Network (CTN) to ensure that efforts are coordinated.

The CTN already had \$25 million to build out a secure broadband network for health care providers, and has 860+ sites participating. With the advent of the stimulus funding, the CTN is applying for BTOP and RUS funds on behalf of all of the sites, and is currently recruiting more sites. For more information contact Andie Martinez, Associate Director of Policy (amartinez@cpcapca.org).

CPCA: CPCA continues to sit on the Advisory Board of the CTN and is participating in all discussions about a statewide broadband infrastructure.

Word on the Street

During the August 3 DHCS/ CPCA Quarterly Meeting, DHCS staff informed CPCA that the first year of Medicaid EHR incentive funding is available to eligible professionals before the eligible professionals demonstrates meaningful use. In the subsequent years, providers will be required to prove meaningful use according to the benchmarks and then receive the incentive funding. This was new information to CPCA and CPCA has requested this information in writing from DHCS to share with members.

Timeline

2009	Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CPCA drafting REC concept paper/business plan• State draft of California HIT Strategic Plan released• Regional Extension Center guidelines/RFP released by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC)• CMS to release definition of meaningful use (m.u.), comment period to follow• CPCA EHR workgroup to draft comments on m.u. definition• CPCA with California Safety Net Coalition to draft comments on m.u. definition
	August 25	
	Late August	
2010	December	
	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction on the California Telehealth

	Early 2010	Network begins <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EHR Loan Fund (likely CHFFA) to make loans available to eligible providers in California
2011	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medicaid EHR Incentive Funds available to eligible professionals

Resources (linked on website)

CPCA

- Comments on Meaningful Use
- Comments on Regional Extension Centers
- White Paper: What Community Clinics and Health Centers Need for Successful HIE in California

CHCF Issue Brief

- An Unprecedented Opportunity: Using Federal Stimulus Funds to Advance HIT in California
- The Impact of Federal Stimulus Funds on Community Health Centers in California

Community Clinic Initiative

- Health Information Technology Resources for Community Clinics

Federal Government

- Second iteration of meaningful use matrix
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