

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR GRANT OPPORTUNITIES
AND CMS FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) serves as the principal federal entity charged with coordinating the overall effort to implement a nationwide health information technology infrastructure that allows for the electronic use and exchange of health information.

Specifically, the ONC is authorized by Title XXX of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act to provide grant funding to support States' efforts in achieving meaningful use of certified Electronic Health Records (EHRs). To that end, on August 20, 2009, Vice President Joe Biden announced the availability of two grant programs to help hospitals and health care providers implement and use EHRs.

The grants made available under Section 3012 of the PHS Act provide funding for Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers. This grant funding opportunity establishes Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers which will be supported by a national Health Information Technology Research Center. Extension Centers will provide hospitals and clinicians technical assistance in selection, acquisition, implementation and meaningful use of certified EHR technology.

The grants made available under Section 3013 of the PHS Act provide funding for the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. This grant funding opportunity establishes funding through cooperative agreements to support efforts to achieve widespread and sustainable health information exchange (HIE) within and among States, and to facilitate and expand the secure, electronic movement and use of health information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards. State programs to promote HIE will help to realize the full potential of EHRs to improve the coordination, efficiency and quality of care. These grants will support statewide planning and implementation and funding for the States' overall Health Information Technology (HIT) strategy.

CMS believes that State Medicaid programs are a critical, decisional partner in these comprehensive statewide plans for the electronic exchange of health information. Additionally, CMS recognizes that Medicaid EHR incentives are one important part of overall planning efforts for statewide HIT adoption and HIE that will be supported by these grant programs.

It should be noted that additional grant funding opportunities are available and CMS encourages States to review Title XXX of the PHS Act and, if appropriate, to submit grant applications to ONC. In addition to ONC funding for statewide HIT planning efforts, CMS is providing 90 percent Federal financial participation for the development of the State Medicaid HIT Plan (SMHP) and eventually, for administration of the incentive payments for meaningful use of certified EHR technology. The SMHP must focus on the Medicaid strategy for moving toward meaningful use of certified EHR technology and should be consistent with and complementary to the overall State HIT strategy developed under section 3013 of the PHS Act. State Medicaid Directors should consult with ONC and State HIT Coordinators and/or State Designated Entities (SDEs) in developing the SMHP to prevent duplicative planning of statewide HIT and HIE activities and Medicaid HIT activities.

The SMHP will focus on Medicaid's role in the overall State strategic plan for HIE and will be reviewed by CMS and ONC to ensure a coordinated, integrated strategy for planning activities. In addition, CMS and ONC are working together internally and with CMS regional offices to ensure a consistent and coordinated strategy for overall State HIT planning activities.