

## HITEC-LA Selects Preferred Vendors for Certified Electronic Health Records

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HITEC-LA, the Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (REC) for Los Angeles County, was formed to help health care providers select the right certified electronic health record (EHR) system for their practices, and guide them through the entire implementation process to reach meaningful use.

A key initiative that HITEC-LA has performed was selecting preferred EHR vendors that are certified by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and also offer provider-centric contract terms to its members, who are primary care providers and specialists in solo, small group, and clinic practice settings in L.A. County.

To thoroughly assess and select these certified EHR vendors, HITEC-LA conducted a two-stage process. In Stage 1, an independent consulting company performed an extensive request for proposal evaluation resulting in the selec-

tion of eight vendors. In Stage 2, HITEC-LA evaluated vendors, including those selected in Stage 1, using criteria specific to the needs of solo and small practices in Los Angeles County. Stage 2 resulted in one additional vendor being chosen. After both stages were complete, HITEC-LA entered into contract discussions with the nine vendors that were selected, and finalized contracts with five of those to date.

“The goal of our contracts with vendors is to make purchasing a certified EHR as beneficial to providers as possible,” says Ali Modarressi, Director of EHR Technology for HITEC-LA.

As of mid-July, HITEC-LA has contracted Office Ally, eClinical-Works, athenahealth, GE Healthcare, and Greenway, as preferred vendors. Those vendors’ certified EHR solutions include features that providers need to successfully achieve meaningful use and as a result, qualify for Medicare and Medicaid incentives. HITEC-LA may announce additional preferred vendors as their contracts are finalized.

“We are pleased to offer preferred EHR vendors with favorable terms to the solo providers, small practices, and clinics that we serve,” says Mary Franz, Executive Director for HITEC-LA. “These vendors offer certified EHR solutions that help providers achieve meaningful use and improve the quality of care that they deliver.”

Through these multiple vendors, a wide range of certified EHR options is available for HITEC-LA’s members throughout Los Angeles County. Providers who sign up for HITEC-LA membership are offered a certified EHR selection process to help them assess their needs and choose a vendor that is the best fit for their practice. Even though it has selected preferred EHR vendors, HITEC-LA is vendor neutral, and can help providers implement any EHR certified by the ONC.

RECs were formed under the Health Information Technology Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, which is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. In addition to developing the RECs, the HI-

TECH Act also created the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs, which provide incentive payments to eligible professionals as they adopt, implement, upgrade, or demonstrate meaningful use of certified EHR technology. Eligible health care providers can receive up to \$63,750 under the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program or up to \$44,000 under the Medicare EHR Incentive Program.

HITEC-LA was founded in on April 6, 2010 under the HITECH Act when the federal government awarded L.A. Care Health Plan, the nation's largest public health plan, a grant to establish the exclusive REC for Los Angeles County. HITEC-LA's goal is to help 3,000 providers become meaningful users of EHR technology by April 2014.

Slightly more than one year after it was founded, its membership has already passed 2,400 health care providers and continues to grow steadily. HITEC-LA offers providers valuable services such as readiness assessments, infrastructure counseling, gap analysis, vendor selection support, project management, training, and other guidance. These services are subsidized for eligible primary care providers; specialists and other health care providers receive substantial discounts.

"Thanks to the entire community for our continued success." says Mary Franz, Executive Director for HITEC-LA. "We are not only signing up health care providers, we are actively moving forward and getting them on the road to meaningful use, which will further

improve the quality of care that they can offer their patients."

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