



The State Office of Rural Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COLORADO EMERGING AS A LEADER IN THE AREA OF HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

DENVER, Colo. – The Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO) recently issued a press release announcing completion of its Regional Extension Center (REC) program. According to the release, 2,295 health care providers and 33 rural and Critical Access Hospitals were successful in adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records (EHR) technology.

The REC program provides on-the-ground technical assistance by supporting health care providers with EHR adoption, demonstration of meaningful use, and HealthIT needs.

The REC program was initiated in early 2010 by The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) – through federal stimulus bill, known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – which established 62 Regional Extension Centers across the nation. Additional supplemental awards were issued to further assist rural and Critical Access Hospitals.

REC funds were distributed to a diverse group of existing and newly formed organizations with expertise in EHR adoption. In Colorado, CORHIO was selected as the REC grantee tasked with providing the management and oversight for the program.

CORHIO partnered with seven organizations; ClinicNET, Colorado Community Managed Care Network, Colorado Rural Health Center, Health TeamWorks, Physician Health Partners, Telligen (formerly Colorado Foundation for Medical Care) and Quality Health Network.

The Colorado Rural Health Center was selected based on their expertise guiding workflow analyses with Colorado Critical Access Hospitals, rural hospitals and rural clinics.

Since 2010, the Colorado Rural Health Center assisted the REC program with assessment and implementation support, vendor selection, leveraging volume discounts, project management, workflow redesign, functional interoperability, privacy and security best practices, and progress toward meaningful use.

The initial goal was for 85 percent of rural and Critical Access Hospitals participating in the program to become meaningful users of EHR by 2014. The program just completed with 100 percent of hospitals reaching that goal.

“The Colorado Rural Health Center would like to recognize the efforts of the 261 rural healthcare providers that participated in the program,” said Michelle Mills, CRHC’s chief executive.

“Rural healthcare providers have unique attributes that require specific consideration in their acquisition and implementation of EHR,” adds Mills. “CRHC was able to assist rural providers with all stages of the EHR adoption process.”

CRHC’s senior advisor, David Ginsberg, proved an invaluable resource, bringing years of HIT expertise and experience working with rural providers.

“CRHC approached the REC program recognizing the tremendous challenges and barriers faced by our Critical Access Hospitals as well as rural clinics in the adoption and implementation of certified electronic health record technology and reaching meaningful use,” said Ginsberg.

“With the dedicated support of CRHC’s internal team and the commitment of our field representatives – what seemed to be an unachievable goal - was met,” adds Ginsberg.

Mills added that for many hospitals, access to capital funding for purchasing an EHR system was limited, and many lacked the resources or internal expertise required to appropriately evaluate, plan, purchase and implement these technology solutions.

“The REC program proved to be an invaluable opportunity for rural providers in their health IT adoption,” says Mills. “It also focused on the larger movement toward technology for care delivery transformation and improvement.”

In Colorado, the REC program concluded with 2,295 providers and 33 Rural PPS and Critical Access Hospitals achieving milestone three by attesting to Meaningful Use. Over \$100 million dollars in incentives for health care providers were made available through the program, and Colorado is now one of the highest states in the nation for HIT adoption.

To learn more about CORHIO and Colorado’s REC program, visit <http://www.corhio.org/co-rec.aspx>. To learn more about the Regional Extension Center

program visit the HealthIT.gov website at <http://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/regional-extension-centers-recs>.

About The Colorado Rural Health Center

The Colorado Rural Health Center was established in 1991 as Colorado's State Office of Rural Health. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, CRHC serves dual roles as the State Office of Rural Health with the mission of assisting rural communities in addressing healthcare issues; and as the State Rural Health Association, advocating for policy change to ensure that rural Coloradoans have access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare services of the highest quality. For more information visit www.coruralhealth.org, call 303-832-7493, or call toll free 800-851-6782 from rural Colorado.

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