

## A Message From Our Sponsor:



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HCA, Director of Policy  
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We are in the midst of a pivotal time in national and state health information technology arenas. The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) began slowly, but are now on a fast track. Several funding opportunity announcements have been released by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC), with tight deadlines that will require many organizations to work through the holidays.

I am very pleased with the amount of stakeholder support and collaboration which will greatly improve Washington State's position in the selection process for HITECH funding. With the help of [OneHealthPort](#), we are making great strides in the Health Information Exchange (HIE) planning and implementation area, and meeting requirements of Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5501.

I also want to recognize and thank [QUALIS Health](#), Bellevue College, and everyone working with them to ensure success with their respective Workforce Training and Development and the Regional Extension Center (REC) program funding activities. We could not have made such progress without your hard work, knowledge and willingness to collaborate.

With this in mind, I want to briefly describe how we have organized the eHealth Collaborative Enterprise (eHCE) to address the work ahead.

The eHCE is a work group within the Health Care Authority that is responsible for coordinating statewide activities of the federal HITECH Act and related state health information infrastructure activities.

**The Vision** of the eHCE is to improve health care quality and efficiency by facilitating access to comprehensive electronic health information whenever and wherever needed.

**The Mission** of the eHCE is to form working partnerships with public and private organizations to encourage and promote activities that protect public interest and support the eHealth Collaborative Enterprise Vision, including:

- Creating a statewide system for health information exchange that allows electronic access to health-related information, using nationally recognized standards;
- Helping providers meet "meaningful use" criteria with certified electronic medical record systems;
- Helping consumers access their electronic health record;
- Educating medical professionals and their support staff to use health information exchange technology;
- Helping make TeleHealth and TeleMedicine possible; and
- Advancing research and development of new or enhanced health information technology.

Another goal of the eHCE is to provide clear and timely communications to promote accountability and transparency. Our electronic [mailing list](#), [web site](#), and newsletter are our primary communication methods. I encourage you to provide feedback and let us know if our communications meet your needs and expectations.

From all of us at the eHCE, our best wishes for safe and happy holidays!

Sincerely,

Richard Onizuka, Ph.D.

## eHealth Collaborative Enterprise Status

- Finalized HIE lead organization roles and responsibilities.
- Finalized the eHCE vision and mission statements.
- Submitted SSB 5501 Activity Report to the legislature.
- Presented HITECH program update to:
  - Washington State health agency representatives
  - Washington State Legislative Staff
  - Puget Sound Regional Council
  - Puget Sound Health Alliance
- Developed a process for requesting a letter of support from the state Health IT Coordinator for communities applying for the Beacon Communities Program grant.
- Work with Department of Information Services to help analyze current landscape of state Health Information Infrastructure.
- Work with OneHealthPort to develop statewide HIE strategic and operational plans.

## ARRA/HITECH Activity Update

### Health Information Exchange (HIE) Planning and Implementation -

OneHealthPort hit the ground running as the lead organization for HIE Planning and Implementation. They recently completed public meetings throughout the state to provide an overview of the project scope and find out which organizations are willing to pay for and use HIE. For information about the meetings, and current status of the project, please go to OneHealthPort's HIE web page.

According to the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC), initial review of Washington State's HIE grant application is complete, however, the in-depth review process continues. The ONC expects to announce the status of applications in January.

The ONC released a new Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program. This FOA has a different focus than the HIE FOA. The HIE grant application funding is intended to support shared infrastructure for statewide health information exchange.

The Beacon Communities funding is for local and regional community health information infrastructure. Communities that apply for this grant opportunity will require a letter of support from the state Health IT Coordinator and other public officials. The eHCE developed a process for applicants to obtain these letters.

### Electronic Health Record Loan Program -

No progress to report. The ONC will likely provide guidance after meaningful use requirements are released in early January. No lead organization has been named.

### Health IT Regional Extension Program -

First cycle applicants received initial feedback from the ONC. All first cycle applicants were encouraged to apply for the second cycle, which was due on 12/22. First cycle selection announcements are expected on January 21. QUALIS Health is the lead organization for this activity.

### Workforce Training and Development -

Bellevue College is the lead applicant in a 10-state consortium, seeking \$6.2M in funding for health IT training. Bellevue was the unanimous choice of the cross-state group, which seeks underwriting to train 1,500 workers in two years. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will fund five regional consortia nationally, all part of an effort to gear up a health IT workforce, through the federal stimulus package.

Washington leads Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North & South Dakota, Utah and Colorado in a unified plan to offer short term certificates. The goal is to put people to work, assisting in the national roll-out of electronic medical records. Every physician practice, clinic and hospital in the United States receives incentive funding from the federal government to digitalize patient records. Failing to do so will result in penalties.

Several Washington State community colleges will participate by launching newly developed classes for those seeking employment in health care. If funded in March, 2010, Bellevue College will lead both the state and regional consortium in two years of rapid response training. See the latest Workforce Training and Development FOA for Information Technology Professionals in Health Care: Program of Assistance for University-Based Training.

### Research & Development (R&D) and New Technology Research Grants -

The University of Washington has been designated as the lead organization for the R&D HITECH activity. More details regarding this designation and contact information will be provided on the eHCE website, along with the recent FOA for the Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) Program

### Telemedicine/Telehealth and Broadband -

The Washington Telehealth Consortium (WTC) has been designated as the lead organization for this ARRA activity. While not within the HITECH area, this is a core health IT infrastructure activity that was determined to be included within the scope of the eHCE to ensure coordination across HITECH programs as needed. Information concerning this designation and contact information will be provided on the eHCE website.