

News Release

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HHS awards Affordable Care Act funds to improve quality of care and electronic reporting capabilities in Beacon Communities

\$8.5 million to fund 85 health centers in 15 Beacon Communities across the country

Today, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Administrator, Dr. Mary Wakefield, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, Dr. Farzad Mostashari, announced awards of \$8.5 million to 85 community health center programs, located in 15 of the 17 Beacon Communities throughout the United States. These funds, made available through HRSA under the Affordable Care Act, help support health centers with the adoption of health information technology (HIT) to support long-term improvements in quality of care, health outcomes and cost efficiencies.

Beacon Communities receive funds through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to build and strengthen their HIT infrastructure and exchange capabilities to improve care coordination, increase the quality of care, and slow the growth of health care spending. Today's awards from HRSA are intended to enable existing health centers located in Beacon Communities to participate in community-wide health care improvement initiatives that include a strong information technology component. Recipients include health centers in cities across the country, from Cincinnati, Ohio and Detroit, Mich. to Spokane, Wash. and San Diego, Calif.

“ Beacon Communities are about empowering doctors, nurses, patients, and community leaders to come together and use technology to make tangible differences in the lives of everyday Americans,” said HRSA Administrator Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N. “ The health information technology they use is a vital tool in reaching and treating the vulnerable populations we serve, and the partnerships strengthened through these awards will strengthen health centers' efforts to deliver comprehensive, high-quality primary health care.”

“ These communities have already demonstrated their commitment to cutting edge health information technology,” said HHS National Coordinator for Health Information Technology Dr. Farzad Mostashari. “ Today’ s awards are an important step in giving these communities the resources they need to implement home-grown programs that work for them and that can be sustained for years to come.”

These awards are another part of the Obama Administration’ s efforts to improve the quality of care, increase Americans’ access to information and empower them to become active participants in their health. Eligible applicants included existing Health Center Program grantees located within a Beacon Community Program service area. A list of health center Beacon community supplemental funding grantees by organization and state is available at www.hrsa.gov/about/news/2011tables/beaconawards.html.

For more information about the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology and the Beacon Community Program, please visit <http://healthit.hhs.gov>.

To learn more about the Affordable Care Act, visit www.healthcare.gov.

For more information about HRSA’ s Community Health Center Program, visit <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/about/index.html>.

To find a health center in your area, visit <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

The Health Resources and Services Administration is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA is the primary Federal agency responsible for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. For more information about HRSA and its programs, visit www.hrsa.gov.

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

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