



CONTACT:

Erich Kirshner
Kirshner Communications for CORHIO
(303) 376-6135 office
(303) 921-6733 cell
erich@kirshnercommunications.com

CO-REC READY TO ASSIST COLORADO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD SYSTEMS AND ACHIEVING 'MEANINGFUL USE'

Arrival of EHR Meaningful Use Rules Signals Providers That It's Time To Implement New IT Systems And Workflows

DENVER, CO – July 29 2010 – Recognizing that earlier in July, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT released rules outlining which health care providers will get government funding to support their implementation of electronic health record systems (EHR), leaders at the Colorado Regional Health Information Organization say it's time for providers who don't have an EHR system to start the process of purchasing one.

“We know that purchasing the right electronic health record system is daunting for most providers, and we're here to help,” said Robyn Leone, director of the Colorado Regional Extension Center (CO-REC) at CORHIO. If primary care providers qualify for government funding, they could get money to help offset their electronic health record system costs as early as June 2011, according to Leone.

CO-REC is one of 60 Regional Extension Centers around the country designated to offer health care providers technical assistance, guidance and information on best practices to support and accelerate health care provider efforts to become meaningful users of electronic health record systems.

Eligible health care professionals and hospitals may qualify for Medicare or Medicaid incentive payments when they adopt certified EHR technology and use it to achieve specified objectives. One of the two regulations announced by HHS earlier in July defines the “meaningful use” objectives that providers must meet to qualify for the bonus payments, and the other regulation identifies the technical capabilities required for certified EHR technology.

With “meaningful use” definitions in place, CO-REC is working with primary care providers and their practices to ensure that the EHR systems they acquire will support achievement of “meaningful use” objectives.

“CO-REC and its six partner organizations provide the needed hands-on, field support for all health care providers in Colorado to advance the rapid adoption and use of health IT,” said Leone. “CO-REC services launched this month and having the final rule for meaningful use helps us assist small, primary care practices to achieve meaningful use and access federal stimulus funds as soon as possible.”

CO-REC is pursuing a comprehensive strategy to support practices and hospitals in achieving meaningful use by providing services, at no charge, that help providers:

- Effectively select, implement and meaningfully use an EHR
- Negotiate purchases of, and pricing for EHRs, including standard interfaces
- Progress towards meaningful use of an existing EHR
- Optimize practice workflow to ensure improvements in the quality of care
- Understand and negotiate favorable EHR contract language regarding health information exchange (HIE) interfaces before selection of an EHR so that the provider can position itself to take full advantage of interoperability, and at lower costs
- Protect the integrity, privacy and security of patients’ health records
- Meet the qualifications for incentive payments from Medicaid or Medicare

The six community partners that are part of the CO-REC include ClinicNET, the Colorado Community Managed Care Network, the Colorado Foundation for Medical Care, the Colorado Rural Health Center, Health TeamWorks, Physician Health Partners and Quality Health Network.

About CORHIO

CORHIO is dedicated to improving health care quality for all Coloradans through health information exchange (HIE). As the state designated entity for HIE, CORHIO collaborates with health care stakeholders including physicians, hospitals, clinics, public health, long-term care, laboratories, health plans and patients to develop secure systems and processes for sharing clinical information. CO-REC, a CORHIO initiative, assists primary care providers in adopting, implementing and becoming meaningful users of electronic health record (EHR) systems. CORHIO is a not-for-profit supported by grants from The Colorado Health Foundation and from federal ARRA HITECH funds. For more information about CORHIO, please visit www.corhio.org.

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