

Loan Fund to Improve Access to Electronic Health Records

Small, rural and urban primary care practices in North Carolina may be eligible for a collaborative loan program that can provide funds to assist in the implementation of electronic health records for practices and their patients. Practices in all 100 counties of North Carolina are eligible to apply.

The funds may be used to purchase certified Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology or to upgrade existing equipment to meet certification criteria, to train staff in the use of the technology, or to improve the secure exchange of health information through the N.C. Health Information Exchange.

The loan program, formerly funded by the N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund, is now housed within the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Health Information Technology, in partnership with the North Carolina Medical Society Foundation and the Center for Community Self-Help.

Prequalification information, applications and additional details are available online at www.ncehrloanfund.org. Practices serving disproportionate numbers of Medicaid/Medicare and indigent patients will be given priority. Loan size will vary based on the practice's need for equipment and training. The average loan ranges from \$40,000 to \$60,000.

The North Carolina Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is the agency receiving funding for North Carolina's Regional Extension Center. AHEC's Primary Care Consultants work in cooperation with the N.C. DHHS Office of Health Information Technology to ensure that loan recipient practices receive technical assistance to successfully implement EHRs and qualify and receive the Medicaid/Medicare incentive payment and repay the loan fund.

Contact: Terri Gonzalez, Practice Technical Assistance Coordinator, North Carolina Medical Society Foundation, tgonzalez@ncmedsoc.org, (919) 865-5251. The foundation works with applicants to complete the loan application, provide technical assistance and financial guidance.

