

October 7, 2009

Dear Healthcare Provider:

As you are no doubt aware, healthcare providers are expected to achieve “meaningful use” of electronic health record systems (EHRs) by the year 2015 or be subject to financial penalties under Medicare. Conversely, the stimulus bill included Medicare and Medicaid financial incentives for the use of EHRs. What you may not have heard is that a new federally funded program has been established to provide EHR-related technical assistance to selected healthcare providers and organizations.

The DHHS’ Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology has solicited applications for Health Information Technology Extension Program “Regional Extension Centers” (RECs) to provide the technical assistance in specific areas across the country. With the support of a number of private and public sector partners, Qualis Health—an independent, nonprofit organization that provides healthcare quality improvement and care management services—is applying to become a REC in Idaho and Washington. To the best of our knowledge, no other proposals to serve either state have been submitted.

While there is no guarantee that our region will receive REC funding, your response to the attached form will indicate to the Federal government that there is a high level of support and interest in utilizing REC services locally.

What will the RECS do?

RECs will provide technical assistance and education regarding the selection, implementation, and use of EHRs. (See the attached form for a more detailed listing.)

Who are the “targeted” healthcare organizations?

The following types of organizations are designated as having priority for receiving REC assistance:

- Individual and small group practices predominantly focused on primary care (10 or fewer professionals with prescriptive privileges)
- Community health centers and rural health clinics
- Public and critical access hospitals
- Other settings that primarily serve uninsured, underinsured, or medically underserved populations

If your organization may be interested in accessing REC services, **please complete and fax the attached form to Qualis Health by October 23, 2009.** Signing the form incurs no obligation to participate. However, if Qualis Health is funded for the REC program, organizations that have previously indicated interest in accessing REC services will receive priority as technical assistance is deployed.

If you have questions, please contact Kathryn Empson at 206-288-2461 or by email at kathryne@qualishealth.org.

Sincerely,