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Foundation receives \$8.5 million for formation of electronic health records

IRVING, TX – The days of attempting to read a doctor’s hand-written instructions may be over. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) awarded \$8.5 million to the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation (Foundation) on April 6 for the formation of the North Texas Regional Extension Center (NTREC). NTREC will assist North Texas physicians in 43 counties in implementing electronic health records and will be governed by physicians in the Dallas-Fort Worth area affiliated with the Texas Medical Association. Additional leaders are from University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, University of Texas Dallas and the Foundation.

“This funding will permit North Texas healthcare providers to serve their patients while utilizing the most effective electronic health records and healthcare technology on the market,” said Dr. David Bragg, NTREC Board Member. “This helps providers reorganize the way they practice and work towards maximum efficiency in using electronic health records as prescribed by ONCHIT.”

The \$8.5 million (Grant #90RC0048) will offset physician and provider costs associated with the implementation of electronic health records. ONCHIT, an extension of the Department of Health and Human Services, is attempting to modernize the U.S. health care system by implementing a nationwide health information technology infrastructure as called for in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Electronic health records are collections of digital information about patients or populations capable of being shared across different health care settings allowing for the automation of workflow.

“This award provides needed funds to local providers who find it difficult to afford electronic health records,” said Harvey Fishero, Foundation Chairman. “This funding will be helpful to local healthcare providers because they are experiencing decreasing reimbursements from insurance providers and the government at the same time they are caring for increasing numbers of uninsured and underinsured patients needing treatment.”

Regional extension centers such as NTREC offer technical assistance, guidance and information on best practices to support and accelerate health care providers’ use of electronic health records. Three additional extension centers were approved for Texas covering the coastal, central and western regions.

Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 public charity with a mission to continually improve the community’s health by promoting safe, high quality, cost effective, accessible and equitable healthcare and by strengthening the healthcare workforce through education, research and collaboration.

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