

tion among Federal agencies in the promotion of telemedicine.

(5) Promotion of the interoperability of clinical data repositories or registries.

(6) Promotion of technologies and best practices that enhance the protection of health information by all holders of individually identifiable health information.

(7) Improvement and expansion of the use of health information technology by public health departments.

(b) Coordination

The Secretary shall ensure funds under this section are used in a coordinated manner with other health information promotion activities.

(c) Additional use of funds

In addition to using funds as provided in subsection (a), the Secretary may use amounts appropriated under section 300jj-38 of this title to carry out health information technology activities that are provided for under laws in effect on February 17, 2009.

(d) Standards for acquisition of health information technology

To the greatest extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure that where funds are expended under this section for the acquisition of health information technology, such funds shall be used to acquire health information technology that meets applicable standards adopted under section 300jj-14 of this title. Where it is not practicable to expend funds on health information technology that meets such applicable standards, the Secretary shall ensure that such health information technology meets applicable standards otherwise adopted by the Secretary.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXX, §3011, as added Pub. L. 111-5, div. A, title XIII, §13301, Feb. 17, 2009, 123 Stat. 246.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Social Security Act, referred to in subsec. (a)(2), (3), is act Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, 49 Stat. 620. Titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Act are classified generally to subchapters XVIII (§1395 et seq.), XIX (§1396 et seq.), and XXI (§1397aa et seq.) of chapter 7 of this title, respectively. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 1305 of this title and Tables.

§ 300jj-32. Health information technology implementation assistance

(a) Health information technology extension program

To assist health care providers to adopt, implement, and effectively use certified EHR technology that allows for the electronic exchange and use of health information, the Secretary, acting through the Office of the National Coordinator, shall establish a health information technology extension program to provide health information technology assistance services to be carried out through the Department of Health and Human Services. The National Coordinator shall consult with other Federal agencies with demonstrated experience and expertise in information technology services, such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology, in developing and implementing this program.

(b) Health Information Technology Research Center

(1) In general

The Secretary shall create a Health Information Technology Research Center (in this section referred to as the “Center”) to provide technical assistance and develop or recognize best practices to support and accelerate efforts to adopt, implement, and effectively utilize health information technology that allows for the electronic exchange and use of information in compliance with standards, implementation specifications, and certification criteria adopted under section 300jj-14 of this title.

(2) Input

The Center shall incorporate input from—

(A) other Federal agencies with demonstrated experience and expertise in information technology services such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology;

(B) users of health information technology, such as providers and their support and clerical staff and others involved in the care and care coordination of patients, from the health care and health information technology industry; and

(C) others as appropriate.

(3) Purposes

The purposes of the Center are to—

(A) provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience;

(B) accelerate the transfer of lessons learned from existing public and private sector initiatives, including those currently receiving Federal financial support;

(C) assemble, analyze, and widely disseminate evidence and experience related to the adoption, implementation, and effective use of health information technology that allows for the electronic exchange and use of information including through the regional centers described in subsection (c);

(D) provide technical assistance for the establishment and evaluation of regional and local health information networks to facilitate the electronic exchange of information across health care settings and improve the quality of health care;

(E) provide technical assistance for the development and dissemination of solutions to barriers to the exchange of electronic health information; and

(F) learn about effective strategies to adopt and utilize health information technology in medically underserved communities.

(c) Health information technology regional extension centers

(1) In general

The Secretary shall provide assistance for the creation and support of regional centers (in this subsection referred to as “regional centers”) to provide technical assistance and disseminate best practices and other information learned from the Center to support and accelerate efforts to adopt, implement, and ef-

fectively utilize health information technology that allows for the electronic exchange and use of information in compliance with standards, implementation specifications, and certification criteria adopted under section 300jj-14 of this title. Activities conducted under this subsection shall be consistent with the strategic plan developed by the National Coordinator, (and, as available) under section 300jj-11 of this title.

(2) Affiliation

Regional centers shall be affiliated with any United States-based nonprofit institution or organization, or group thereof, that applies and is awarded financial assistance under this section. Individual awards shall be decided on the basis of merit.

(3) Objective

The objective of the regional centers is to enhance and promote the adoption of health information technology through—

(A) assistance with the implementation, effective use, upgrading, and ongoing maintenance of health information technology, including electronic health records, to healthcare providers nationwide;

(B) broad participation of individuals from industry, universities, and State governments;

(C) active dissemination of best practices and research on the implementation, effective use, upgrading, and ongoing maintenance of health information technology, including electronic health records, to health care providers in order to improve the quality of healthcare and protect the privacy and security of health information;

(D) participation, to the extent practicable, in health information exchanges;

(E) utilization, when appropriate, of the expertise and capability that exists in Federal agencies other than the Department; and

(F) integration of health information technology, including electronic health records, into the initial and ongoing training of health professionals and others in the healthcare industry that would be instrumental to improving the quality of healthcare through the smooth and accurate electronic use and exchange of health information.

(4) Regional assistance

Each regional center shall aim to provide assistance and education to all providers in a region, but shall prioritize any direct assistance first to the following:

(A) Public or not-for-profit hospitals or critical access hospitals.

(B) Federally qualified health centers (as defined in section 1395x(aa)(4) of this title).

(C) Entities that are located in rural and other areas that serve uninsured, underinsured, and medically underserved individuals (regardless of whether such area is urban or rural).

(D) Individual or small group practices (or a consortium thereof) that are primarily focused on primary care.

(5) Financial support

The Secretary may provide financial support to any regional center created under this subsection for a period not to exceed four years. The Secretary may not provide more than 50 percent of the capital and annual operating and maintenance funds required to create and maintain such a center, except in an instance of national economic conditions which would render this cost-share requirement detrimental to the program and upon notification to Congress as to the justification to waive the cost-share requirement.

(6) Notice of program description and availability of funds

The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register, not later than 90 days after February 17, 2009, a draft description of the program for establishing regional centers under this subsection. Such description shall include the following:

(A) A detailed explanation of the program and the programs¹ goals.

(B) Procedures to be followed by the applicants.

(C) Criteria for determining qualified applicants.

(D) Maximum support levels expected to be available to centers under the program.

(7) Application review

The Secretary shall subject each application under this subsection to merit review. In making a decision whether to approve such application and provide financial support, the Secretary shall consider at a minimum the merits of the application, including those portions of the application regarding—

(A) the ability of the applicant to provide assistance under this subsection and utilization of health information technology appropriate to the needs of particular categories of health care providers;

(B) the types of service to be provided to health care providers;

(C) geographical diversity and extent of service area; and

(D) the percentage of funding and amount of in-kind commitment from other sources.

(8) Biennial evaluation

Each regional center which receives financial assistance under this subsection shall be evaluated biennially by an evaluation panel appointed by the Secretary. Each evaluation panel shall be composed of private experts, none of whom shall be connected with the center involved, and of Federal officials. Each evaluation panel shall measure the involved center's performance against the objective specified in paragraph (3). The Secretary shall not continue to provide funding to a regional center unless its evaluation is overall positive.

(9) Continuing support

After the second year of assistance under this subsection, a regional center may receive additional support under this subsection if it has received positive evaluations and a finding

¹ So in original.

by the Secretary that continuation of Federal funding to the center was in the best interest of provision of health information technology extension services.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XXX, §3012, as added Pub. L. 111-5, div. A, title XIII, §13301, Feb. 17, 2009, 123 Stat. 247.)

§ 300jj-33. State grants to promote health information technology

(a) In general

The Secretary, acting through the National Coordinator, shall establish a program in accordance with this section to facilitate and expand the electronic movement and use of health information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards.

(b) Planning grants

The Secretary may award a grant to a State or qualified State-designated entity (as described in subsection (f)) that submits an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may specify, for the purpose of planning activities described in subsection (d).

(c) Implementation grants

The Secretary may award a grant to a State or qualified State designated¹ entity that—

(1) has submitted, and the Secretary has approved, a plan described in subsection (e) (regardless of whether such plan was prepared using amounts awarded under subsection (b));² and

(2) submits an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may specify.

(d) Use of funds

Amounts received under a grant under subsection (c) shall be used to conduct activities to facilitate and expand the electronic movement and use of health information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards through activities that include—

(1) enhancing broad and varied participation in the authorized and secure nationwide electronic use and exchange of health information;

(2) identifying State or local resources available towards a nationwide effort to promote health information technology;

(3) complementing other Federal grants, programs, and efforts towards the promotion of health information technology;

(4) providing technical assistance for the development and dissemination of solutions to barriers to the exchange of electronic health information;

(5) promoting effective strategies to adopt and utilize health information technology in medically underserved communities;

(6) assisting patients in utilizing health information technology;

(7) encouraging clinicians to work with Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers as described in section 300jj-32

of this title, to the extent they are available and valuable;

(8) supporting public health agencies' authorized use of and access to electronic health information;

(9) promoting the use of electronic health records for quality improvement including through quality measures reporting; and

(10) such other activities as the Secretary may specify.

(e) Plan

(1) In general

A plan described in this subsection is a plan that describes the activities to be carried out by a State or by the qualified State-designated entity within such State to facilitate and expand the electronic movement and use of health information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards and implementation specifications.

(2) Required elements

A plan described in paragraph (1) shall—

(A) be pursued in the public interest;

(B) be consistent with the strategic plan developed by the National Coordinator, (and, as available) under section 300jj-11 of this title;

(C) include a description of the ways the State or qualified State-designated entity will carry out the activities described in subsection (b); and

(D) contain such elements as the Secretary may require.

(f) Qualified State-designated entity

For purposes of this section, to be a qualified State-designated entity, with respect to a State, an entity shall—

(1) be designated by the State as eligible to receive awards under this section;

(2) be a not-for-profit entity with broad stakeholder representation on its governing board;

(3) demonstrate that one of its principal goals is to use information technology to improve health care quality and efficiency through the authorized and secure electronic exchange and use of health information;

(4) adopt nondiscrimination and conflict of interest policies that demonstrate a commitment to open, fair, and nondiscriminatory participation by stakeholders; and

(5) conform to such other requirements as the Secretary may establish.

(g) Required consultation

In carrying out activities described in subsections (b) and (c), a State or qualified State-designated entity shall consult with and consider the recommendations of—

(1) health care providers (including providers that provide services to low income and underserved populations);

(2) health plans;

(3) patient or consumer organizations that represent the population to be served;

(4) health information technology vendors;

(5) health care purchasers and employers;

(6) public health agencies;

(7) health professions schools, universities and colleges;

¹ So in original. Probably should be "State-designated".

² So in original. Another closing parenthesis probably should precede the semicolon.