

Arizona’s Regional Extension Center:

Assisting Healthcare Providers with Electronic Health Record Adoption and Achievement of Meaningful Use

What is the Arizona Regional Extension Center?

In 2009 federal funds made available through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, a component of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), created an unprecedented investment in and opportunity for health information technology (HIT) in the U.S. Through ARRA, it is estimated that HIT investments may reach \$40 billion over the next eight to 10 years. The final goal of the HITECH Act is to establish an electronic health record (EHR) for each person in the U.S. by 2014!

To that end, \$634 million was made available to non-profit organizations to establish HIT Regional Extension Centers nationwide to assist primary care healthcare providers in adopting and becoming meaningful users of EHR systems. Within Arizona, Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC) was awarded funding to develop a Regional Extension Center program to serve Arizona’s healthcare providers. The program is led by Arizona Health-e Connection in collaboration with Arizona State University's Department of Biomedical Informatics, Health Services Advisory Group and the Purchasing & Assistance Collaborative for Electronic Health Records (PACeHR).

The Arizona Regional Extension Center has an ambitious, yet achievable goal—to assist nearly 60% of Arizona primary care providers in achieving EHR Meaningful Use by 2014! Recent data collected by AzHeC from Arizona healthcare providers shows support for EHR adoption and Regional Extension Center services among Arizona’s provider community.

What Can Arizona’s Regional Extension Center Do for Healthcare Providers?

First and foremost, the Regional Extension Center will serve as a neutral source for credible EHR and HIT information—something much needed as healthcare providers seek to navigate EHR options and select vendors that meet federal Meaningful Use requirements.

Second, the organization will strive to fully identify and provide solutions to the challenges Arizona healthcare providers face in adopting EHR systems. Finally, the Regional Extension Center will provide critical services to EHR adoption as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Regional Extension Center Services	
General Assistance	Technical Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach and education • Workforce support • Tools and resources in all aspects of electronic health record (EHR) and health information technology adoption (HIT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor selection and preferred pricing • Project management • Practice and workflow redesign • System implementation • Interoperability and health information exchange (HIE) • Privacy and security

About

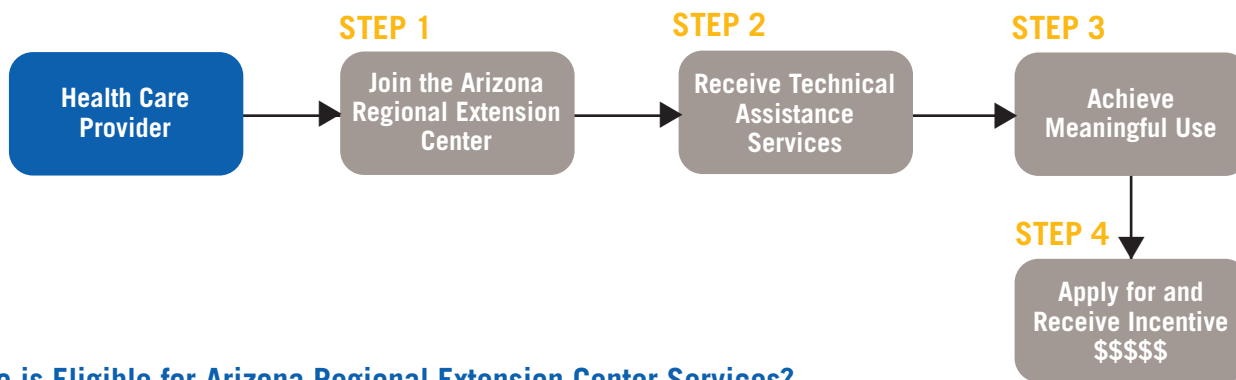
Arizona Health-e Connection

AzHeC is a statewide non-profit charged with leading Arizona’s establishment of health information infrastructure (HII), including adoption of electronic health records and health information exchange.

Now an independent non-profit incorporated in 2007, AzHeC originally grew out of an August 2005 gubernatorial executive order to develop a Roadmap for HII in Arizona.

AzHeC has been widely recognized for its collaborative work in moving Arizona’s HII efforts forward through strategic communication and coordination among multiple stakeholders. AzHeC is the recipient of the coveted Council of State Governments’ Innovations Award and has been featured in a Harvard Business School case study, in addition to serving as the state’s Regional Extension Center.

Regional Extension Center Provider Assistance Process



Who is Eligible for Arizona Regional Extension Center Services?

Any Arizona healthcare provider is eligible for Regional Extension Center services, which will be provided at reasonable, needs-based fees. However, only providers that meet federal “priority primary care provider” criteria will be eligible to receive discounted services due to the federal subsidies provided to the program.

Among Arizona’s estimated 6,700 primary care providers, AzHeC estimates 95 percent match the federal “priority primary care provider” criteria. Eligibility criteria are outlined in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2

Federal Criteria – Who are <i>Primary Care</i> Providers?
<p>According to federal guidelines for Regional Extension Centers, primary care providers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians or other healthcare providers such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners with prescriptive privileges • Primary care includes family medicine, general medicine, ob/gyn and pediatrics

Table 3

Federal Criteria – Who are <i>Priority Primary Care</i> Providers?
<p>According to federal guidelines for Regional Extension Centers, priority primary care providers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and small group practices (ten or fewer professionals with prescriptive privileges) primarily focused on primary care • Public and critical access hospitals • Community health centers and rural health clinics • Other settings that predominately serve uninsured, underinsured and medically underserved populations

How Can I Learn More About the Arizona Regional Extension Center?

- Sign-up to receive Arizona Regional Extension Center email updates – email ehr@azhec.org to be added to the mailing list (Please put “Az Regional Extension Center Updates” in the subject line and include your full name, title, organization, phone number and email address in the body of the email).
- Visit the Regional Extension Center webpage at www.azhec.org.
- Read *Arizona’s Regional Extension Center: An Opportunity to Make Healthcare Higher in Quality and Lower in Costs through Adoption of Electronic Health Records*, an AzHeC Issue Paper with more detailed information about the Arizona Regional Extension Center, found at www.azhec.org.

To learn more about the Arizona Regional Extension Center, please call 602.288.5130, email ehr@azhec.org or visit www.azhec.org.

Arizona Health-e Connection acknowledges the Office of the National Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services for its support of this program, which is funded under award number 90RC0035/01.