This Week in Health Policy…

• Health IT Provisions in the Bill
• Health IT Regional Extension Centers
• Health IT Adoption Toolkit
• States Challenge Health Care Law

Office of Health Policy and Government Relations
Health IT Provisions in the Health Care Bill

On March 23rd, President Obama signed into law the *Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act* (H.R. 3590) and shortly after the reconciliation bill, H.R. 4872. The legislation promotes health information technology (IT) expansion as a tool with the potential to improve quality, access, and efficiency in the health care delivery system. The following is an overview of the bills' health IT provisions:

- Establishes **incentive payments** for providers that apply health IT in improving health outcomes;
- Supports health IT **education and training**;
- Develops standards for reporting of **quality measures** through the use of health IT;
- Creates new programs that use health IT to test **new health care delivery models**;
- Increases the use of health IT in long-term care settings through **financial assistance**;
- Sets standards for health IT that could be used in **health risk assessments** for Medicare patients;
- Develops national standards for **interoperability and security** systems for data analysis.

**H.R. 3590, Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act**

**H.R. 4872, Reconciliation Act of 2010**
Small practices and those serving underserved populations understandably have concerns about the feasibility of health information technology adoption. For that reason, the Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has established federally funded health care IT resource centers called Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers (HITREC).

On April 6th, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) granted $267 million in funding to an additional 28 regional extension centers. This follows the first round of grant funding awarded in February to 32 regional extension centers. This brings the total number of regional extension centers to 60 nationwide.

A complete list of all the regional extension centers can be found here.
The NMA is working with the Office of the National Coordinator to guarantee that NMA physicians receive support continually throughout the health IT adoption process. **The regional extension centers will reach out to NMA state and local society presidents during the months of April and May.**

The regional extension centers serve to furnish health care providers with education, outreach, and technical assistance to successfully adopt health IT and qualify for meaningful use. This help includes, but is not limited to:

- **Technical assistance with health care IT systems**
- **Assist qualifying for meaningful use bonuses**
- **Troubleshooting on hardware, software, and project management**
- **Legal advice on privacy and security issue**
Health IT Resources

- Health IT Adoption Toolbox
- Rural Health IT Adoption Toolbox
- Health IT Bibliography
- Health IT Evaluation Toolkit
- Health IT Survey Compendium
- Health IT Literacy Guide

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
National Resource Center for Health Information Technology
Five more states have filed lawsuits against the U.S. government challenging the constitutionality of the health reform law, primarily the individual mandate. Indiana, North Dakota, Mississippi, Nevada, and Arizona announced this week that they will join the following 14 states:

- Alabama
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Louisiana
- South Dakota
- Michigan
- Nebraska
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Utah
- Washington
- Virginia
- Florida

Text of the Joint Health Reform Lawsuits.
What You Can Do

**We want to hear what you think:**

- What are some challenges you face with implementing health IT in your practice?
- How can the NMA assist your efforts at the national level?

Submit your insights, concerns, questions, or comments on health IT to healthpolicy@nmanet.org.

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