

Health Information Compliance Alert

Grants: Need Help Proving HIT's Value in a Clinic?

NIH funds research on how information systems can improve patient care.

Ambulatory care centers that want to use information technology to improve the quality, safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of healthcare should know about an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality grant program.

The program, Utilizing Health Information Technology to Improve Health Care Quality, supports health IT demonstration projects in ambulatory settings and in the transitions between care settings.

Health IT has been demonstrated to improve health care in large systems, the program's executive summary says. But health IT in outpatient clinics and in transitions between care settings hasn't been studied as much. So the National Institutes of Health wants to study "facilitators and barriers" to health IT implementation such as engagement and training of health care staff, patients, and family in the use of health IT; characteristics of the health care setting; organizational processes and practices; and workflow.

Maximize the Value of the Office Computer

Applicants must seek to evaluate and demonstrate how to "optimize functionality of existing health IT, implement health IT in new settings or with new providers and patient populations, or demonstrate sustainability of health IT," the summary says.

The NIH program looks to evaluate health IT's ability to:

- Improve the quality and safety of medication management;
- Support patient-centered care, the coordination of care across transitions in care settings, and the use of electronic exchange of information to improve quality of care; and
- Improve healthcare decision-making.

The program focuses on ambulatory settings, such as health care clinician offices, outpatient clinics, outpatient mental health centers, outpatient substance abuse centers, urgent care centers, ambulatory surgery centers, communitybased, school, or occupational health centers, safety-net clinics, pharmacies, homes, independent living centers, and longterm residential care facilities; transitions in care between ambulatory settings; or transitions in care between an ambulatory setting and a non-ambulatory setting.

The program is on a funding cycle. The next due date for applications is May 25.

Applicants must register at both grants.gov (www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) and eRA Commons (<http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/preparing.htm>).

Apply for the grant at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/GetGrantFromFedgrants?opportunity=PAR-08-270>.

Research the program at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-270.html#SectionIV>.