

## Health Information Compliance Alert

### INDUSTRY NEWS: Big Grants Could Bring Insurers Health IT Initiatives To Fruition

#### Demonstration tech projects get hefty cash infusions.

The Bush Administration's push to advance health information technology is stirring up grant opportunities galore.

The **Blue Shield of California Foundation** is awarding \$3.12 million in grant monies to 14 nonprofit organizations in California. The Foundation will designate nearly half of that funding to study the effectiveness of new health IT initiatives, medical devices and procedures.

- **Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA)** will receive \$675,000 to pilot a demonstration project to streamline the adoption of new cardiovascular and orthopedic medical devices. The project's mission is to identify how insurers and providers can purchase these technologies more efficiently. The demonstration will also seek out new methods to ensure quality and provide useful information about medical devices and technologies to payers and patients. "There's a lack of information on the comparative value of most new and existing medical devices," IHA board member **Bart Asner, MD** notes in a statement. "Hospitals and doctors are often in the dark when trying to choose the most appropriate devices for their patients and make value-based buying decisions." "The IHA project is important because more information and better incentives are needed to help providers make evidence-based decisions," adds **Lisa Payne Simon**, director of the foundation's health and technology program.
- Massachusetts-based **Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Inc.** will receive \$430,000 to work with San Francisco's **Center for Medical Technology Policy** to develop new methodologies for clinical and cost-effectiveness appraisals of medical innovations.
- The **Health Technology Center of San Francisco (HealthTech)** will receive \$410,000 to improve prospective clinical effectiveness research and medical technology policy in California and throughout the United States. HealthTech's goal is to provide better information about promising but unproven medical technologies to health care decision-makers in an effort to improve health care quality and efficiency.