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CENTER

News Release

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Texas A&M Health Science Center Marketing and Communications

HSC awarded funds for Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center for improving use of electronic health records

(COLLEGE STATION, TX) — Medical errors resulting from misunderstanding a doctor’s written notes could be a thing of the past. Technology is paving the way for better patient care, and the Texas A&M Health Science Center (HSC) is at the forefront of this effort.

The HSC-Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI) has been awarded \$5,279,970 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to form a Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (REC). The center will assist physicians and health care professionals in 47 central and east Texas counties in implementing statewide electronic medical records.

“The Rural and Community Health Institute is very pleased to have been awarded this grant along with our Texas A&M University partners from Mays Business School and the Dwight Look College of Engineering,” said Dr. Robert Morrow, director of medical quality for HSC-RCHI and REC grant principal investigator. “This funding will significantly improve the implementation and use of electronic medical records and health information by physicians and other health care workers in our region. It has the potential to greatly improve health care quality, reduce medical errors and lower health care costs.”

RECs such as the HSC-Rural and Community Health Institute will provide technical assistance, guidance and information on best practices for health care practitioners to become meaningful users of electronic health records. The Health Information Extension Program prioritizes access to health information technology for historically underserved and other special-needs populations and the use of that technology to achieve reduction in health disparities – reflective of the HSC-RCHI mission.

The HSC-Rural and Community Health Institute award is part of \$35,709,106 provided to establish RECS in four Texas regions. Other Texas recipients were the Gulf Coast HITECH Extension Center (The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston), \$15,274,327; North Texas Regional

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HIT Extension Center Consortium (Dallas/Fort Worth Hospital Council), \$8,488,513; and West Texas (Texas Tech Health Science Center), \$6,666,296.

Twenty-eight entities nationwide were awarded more than \$267 million total to establish RECs in this latest round of funding by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, with 32 additional RECs announced in February. The program goal is to provide outreach and support services to at least 100,000 priority primary care providers within two years.

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The Texas A&M Health Science Center provides the state with health education, outreach and research through campuses in Bryan-College Station, Dallas, Temple, Houston, Round Rock, Kingsville, Corpus Christi and McAllen. Its six colleges are the Baylor College of Dentistry, the College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy and the School of Rural Public Health. Other units include the Institute of Biosciences and Technology and the Coastal Bend Health Education Center.

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