Federal Funds To Meet Federal Objectives For Health IT

We would like to provide greater clarity for a statement in “Easing the Adoption and Use of Electronic Health Records in Small Practices” (Apr 2010), comparing the budgets of some electronic health record extension programs with the funding available through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The figures we cited, $60,000–$80,000 per targeted provider for the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative and the New York City Primary Care Information Project, represented total budgets reported by those projects. Other relevant comparisons based on data from the same source show direct costs for those two projects ranging from $15,500 to $39,000, and project support staff costs ranging from $5,500 to 8,000. Proposed federal funding of regional extension centers amounts to roughly $6,400 per targeted provider. And ARRA incentives will offset some of the costs assumed by the earlier programs.

The direct project staff costs may be most comparable to what ARRA is supporting and are in line with ARRA funding. We wanted to make the point that to date, these support services have been provided in the context of robust programs providing an intensive package of services. The program leaders we interviewed were concerned about their ability to meet the ARRA objectives with the level of funding provided.

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