

### Breaking News on Recent HIT Awards

LCF Research (LCF) has reached a significant milestone with the recent announcement of several major health information technology (HIT) awards. LCF has played a leadership role in creating and staffing the community-wide planning coalition that developed the community-wide health information exchange (HIE), the **New Mexico Health Information Collaborative** (NMHIC). These awards will allow LCF to help New Mexico move to the next phase in HIT development.

### DHHS Secretary Announces Awards

LCF received two federal grants from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology through the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**:

- \$7 million **State HIE** contract to further develop the NM HIE network, allowing the secure sharing of electronic patient information across healthcare organizations.
- \$6 million **HIT Regional Extension Center** (HITREC) contract to provide technical assistance to 1,000 NM primary care providers in small and rural practices to implement an electronic health record (EHR), connect practices to the HIE, and use EHRs to improve healthcare quality and efficiency and to qualify for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services **meaningful use** incentives. The HITREC coalition will be led by LCF in collaboration with the **NM Medical Review Association** and the **NM Primary Care Association**.

### e-Reporting Project with the NM Department of Health (NMDOH)

In late 2009, **NMDOH Secretary Alfredo Vigil** designated NMHIC as “the conduit for electronic reporting” of notifiable and significant public health conditions in NM. LCF signed an “e-Reporting Project” contract with the NMDOH to enable NM healthcare providers to electronically report designated conditions to NMHIC, which will provide the data to NMDOH to improve efficiency, avoid redundancy, and enable **meaningful use**.

### RWJF Award to Evaluate NMHIC Impact

LCF will assess NMHIC’s impact on the quality and cost-effectiveness of care among Bernalillo County providers, measuring clinician use as well as the extent to which the HIE reduces duplicate diagnostic radiology and laboratory tests. The NMHIC HIE will integrate a patient’s electronic health information from numerous sources to provide complete clinical data for a clinician at the time of the patient visit.

**Dr. Gunter** commented, “HIE has such great potential, but it is still new and we need more research to provide compelling evidence of its positive impact on healthcare costs and quality.” The funding for this study is provided by the **Aligning Forces for Quality: Development Fund**, a special funding opportunity from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for organizations in **Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q)** communities.

### Social Security Administration (SSA) Award

The **Commissioner of Social Security** announced that LCF received a \$1 million contract award to allow the HIE to send electronic medical records from health providers to the SSA to streamline the processing of disability requests. The records, with patient authorization, will be sent through the **Nationwide Health Information Network** and will significantly shorten the time to make a disability decision and improve the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of the disability program.

### Governor Richardson Highlights \$13 Million Awards

In 2009, **Governor Bill Richardson** designated NMHIC as the state’s official NM HIE. When LCF was recently granted the State HIE and **HIT Regional Extension Center** awards, Governor Richardson issued a press release saying, “Our state is moving forward to ensure that New Mexico has the best and most cost-effective healthcare system possible. Health information technology is a cornerstone of my vision for meaningful reform.”