



What is the GCREC?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) funding to establish a Health Information Regional Extension Center (REC). The Gulf Coast Regional Extension Center (GCREC) is among 62 Regional Extension Centers around the country, designated to offer eligible providers healthcare professionals a local resource for technical assistance, specialized guidance and information on best practices to support and accelerate healthcare provider efforts to become meaningful users of certified Electronic Health Records (EHRs). The GCREC will provide support to the southern half of Texas.

Mission Statement

The mission of the GCREC is to facilitate the meaningful use of health information technology by eligible primary care providers.



Gulf Coast Regional Extension Center (GCREC)

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GULF COAST REGIONAL EXTENSION CENTER



Your Trusted Advisor in Health IT

Why should I participate?

Our priority is helping providers fully understand and take advantage of the full benefits of Electronic Health Records (EHRs). We enable providers to:

- Achieve EHR meaningful use objectives to maximize incentives and minimize financial and administrative burdens associated with implementing new electronic systems
- Improve patient safety and quality of care while reducing costs associated with medical errors, duplicate tests and administering paper records and claims
- Use EHRs in a meaningful ways so that patient information is available when and where it is needed, and care is coordinated across provider teams
- Prepare and position themselves for future pay for performance

Clinicians implementing EHRs that meet federal meaningful use requirements are eligible for Medicare incentives up to \$44,000 and Medicaid incentives up to \$63,750.

How is GCREC beneficial?

- Consulting on business process improvement
- Workflow analysis and design
- Help meeting Meaningful Use for Medicare or Medicaid incentives
- Meaningful Use education and training
- Access to consolidated incentive information relevant to your practice

Is my practice eligible?

In order to receive full services from the GCREC, an eligible provider must:

- Practice in the fields of family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, or obstetrics and gynecology (both physician and mid-level providers). A specialty practice that provides some primary care services can still qualify, please contact us to determine eligibility.
- Providers in a setting that contains ten or fewer providers.
- If your practice contains more than ten providers, you may still qualify, please contact us for more information.

How do I earn incentives?

To be eligible for the incentives, a provider must:

- Use an ONC-ATCB certified EHR in a meaningful manner
- Exchange health information to provide the quality of care (through an HIE, if available)
- Report on quality measures
- Electronic prescribing

How can we help you?

- Assist in selection of the right EHR for the needs of your practice
- Project management to support the implementation of your new system
- Facilitate and measure meaningful use of EHRs
- Workflow analysis
- Provide information on privacy and security
- Assist with federal documentation

Common Questions

- **What if I already have an EHR?**
Providers are eligible for services whether they are using a paper medical record or have already implemented an electronic health record.
- **What if I am already working with a vendor?**
The GCREC does not have a preferred vendor list; we will work with your vendor of choice.
- **What if I don't have a fully implemented EHR?**
The GCREC can review processes and provide recommendations to support a full or optimized implementation. We can also be the provider's advocate to coordinate vendor provided services.
- **What if I need to upgrade my EHR?**
If the practice has been using the current EHR for a number of years, an upgrade to an ONC-ATCB certified version is likely needed to meet Medicare or Medicaid incentive requirements. GCREC can provide the project management resource to coordinate the upgrade.
- **Am I eligible if I am associated with a hospital?**
In some cases, providers associated with public or critical access hospitals are also eligible for service incentives, please contact us.
- **Is GCREC part of the Medicare or Medicaid incentive program?**
The GCREC grant is funded by the Office of the National Coordinator; it is a separate but complementary program that provides consulting assistance to eligible providers. This initiative offers the provider a resource to help the practice navigate the implementation process and Meaningful Use guidelines.