

CORNERSTONE IN FOCUS:

Connecting Americans to Better Health Care

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt recently launched a 40-city tour focusing on ways to drive health care in America toward a system of better value at lower cost. The Secretary, along with other senior HHS officials, is meeting with business and community leaders, patients, and providers as the stakeholders making an impact in the transformation of our health care. The meetings serve to highlight local collaboration and the use of health information technology to increase health care transparency for consumers, improve the quality of care, and reduce medical errors. Learn more about *Connecting to Better Health Care* on the [HHS Web site](#).

HHS Launches Application Period for Electronic Health Records Demonstration Project

A new and innovative Medicare demonstration project launched by HHS will provide incentives to small- and medium-sized primary care physician practices for using electronic health records (EHR) to improve the quality of patient care. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is implementing the five-year project that is designed to show that widespread adoption and use of EHRs will reduce medical errors and improve the quality of care for an estimated 3.6 million consumers.



"Our goal is to revolutionize the way health care data is managed, producing better health outcomes and greater patient satisfaction," said Secretary Leavitt at a recent event in Jacksonville, Fla.

Now through mid-May, communities can apply to be part of the demonstration, which will provide financial incentives to as many as 1,200 physician practices. Total payments over five years may be up to \$58,000 per physician or \$290,000 per practice. To further amplify the effect of this demonstration project, CMS is encouraging that applicants show private-sector support, with likely probability that similar programs will be implemented among employers or health plans in the region

More information about the application process, incentives for physicians, and eligibility requirements can be found on HHS' EHR [fact sheet](#).

Leavitt Praises Local Collaboration, Designates First Chartered Value Exchanges

This month, HHS announced the selection of 14 community collaborations that have been awarded a special federal distinction for their strong commitment to improving quality and value in health care.



Secretary Leavitt designated these partnerships of providers, employers, insurers, and consumers as the nation's first Chartered Value Exchanges (CVE). At stops in Memphis, Tenn. (*left, pictured with Denise Bollheimer*) and Madison, Wis. (*below, pictured with Chris Queram*), Secretary Leavitt praised the groups' efforts to implement cutting-edge, collaborative methods to transform health care at the local level.

"While measures and standards of quality and efficiency must continue to be developed nationally, health care is actually delivered locally," Secretary Leavitt said. "The most effective steps to achieving lasting improvements in health care require a critical mass of support from community stakeholders investing their time and resources toward shared, meaningful, actionable goals."



HHS congratulates the collaboratives awarded CVE status, which represent the following communities:

- Detroit, MI
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Germantown, TN
- Baton Rouge, LA
- Scarborough, ME
- Watertown, MA
- St. Paul, MN
- Albany, NY
- Williamsville, NY
- Portland, OR
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Seattle, WA
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Madison, WI

[Read more online](#) about the CVE designation and the benefits that accompany it.

Isn't it Time? Declare Your Support.

Go online and [sign up today](#) to be a part of the Value-Driven Health Care movement.



"Every American should have access to a full range of information about the quality and cost of their health care options."

Secretary Michael O. Leavitt