

HRSA MOU#
ONC MOU #
USDA Rural Development MOU #

**Memorandum of Understanding between the
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the National
Coordinator for Health Information Technology and the
Health Resources and Services Administration and the
U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development ("Agreement")**

New _____ Amendment _____

Purpose of Agreement

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Rural Development (RD) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have well established programs that serve rural communities. USDA/RD and HHS have a strong history of collaborating to help meet the healthcare needs of rural communities, and today's economic realities make this cooperation vital to providing improved health services to rural communities.

To help meet the health needs of rural America, USDA/RD and HHS's Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will partner to leverage their resources to increase the availability of capital for healthcare facilities and health information technology, with the goal of improving the accessibility and quality of medical services in rural communities.

Areas of Collaborative Effort

USDA/RD and HHS ONC/HRSA agree to pursue collaborative efforts in the following areas in order to achieve the above stated purpose:

Establish working groups for coordinating the delivery of financial and technical assistance to rural hospitals and rural health centers;

Coordinate with local USDA/RD and HHS personnel and state healthcare leaders to develop models for financing capital for facilities and health information technology infrastructure for rural healthcare providers;

Facilitate interactive panel discussions regarding rural healthcare challenges and opportunities at grantee and national level meetings;

Participate in public and private events to discover and address potential barriers to resources or services;

Monitor, measure and evaluate the value and cost effectiveness of policies and programs;

Provide leadership and direction on nationwide messaging, materials, and best practices;
and

Continuously develop additional opportunities for collaboration.

Roles & Responsibilities

HHS Agencies

HRSA and ONC will work with the State Offices of Rural Health (including the Medicare Rural Hospital Medicare Flexibility Coordinators), Primary Care Associations, Regional Extension Centers, and State Health Information Technology Coordinators to encourage interactions with USDA/RD State Office counterparts to facilitate outreach efforts. The focus will primarily be on the potential for Rural Development to support rural health providers through its Rural Business, Community Facilities, Distance Learning and Telemedicine and Community Connect programs.

USDA Rural Development

Rural Development State Directors will continue to work with their HHS counterparts regarding financial support for rural health providers, including funding for medical equipment purchases to support Health Information Technology (HIT) in rural communities.

Participation by USDA in this Agreement does not result in a commitment of funds. USDA's participation in this Agreement is subject to USDA having sufficient program funds available.

HHS and USDA Agencies

USDA/RD, HRSA and ONC will commit representatives to an Interagency Rural Healthcare Working Group that will coordinate this effort nationally. Signatories will assign appropriate senior-level representatives from the various relevant program areas to the Working Group. Working collaboratively, USDA/RD and HHS agencies will focus efforts on the following activities:

Assessing innovative development practices for improving access to capital and sharing that information nationally; and

Promoting partnerships between stakeholders to promote best practices and address programmatic and policy challenges.

Definitions and Web Addresses

A list of State Offices of Rural Health is located at: <http://hrsa.gov/ruralhealth>.

A list of State Primary Care Associations is located at: <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/technicalassistance/>.

Information about Regional Extension Centers is located at:
http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/hit_extension_program/1495/home/17174

Information about the State Health Information Exchange is located at:
http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/community/state_health_information_exchange_cooperative_agreement_program/1336/home/16375

Key points of contact and State Health IT Coordinators are located at:
<http://statehierresources.org/contacts/>

Information about Rural Development is located at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html>

State Rural Development Offices are located at:
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/StateOfficeAddresses.html>

Effective Date

The effective date of the agreement is the date of the latest signature of this Agreement.

General Terms and Conditions

Review

The parties agree to review jointly the terms and conditions at least annually if the period of this project exceeds one year. Appropriate changes will be made by modification/amendment to the original agreement. The parties further agree to review performance under this Agreement to determine if expectations are being met and document a summary of their assessment. The responsible reviewing official at each agency shall sign and date the assessment.

Modifications / Amendments

Any modification/amendment to the terms and conditions shall be made in writing and signed by all agencies.

Termination of Agreement

This Agreement may be terminated upon a 60-calendar day written notice by any party. If this Agreement is terminated, the agencies shall agree to the terms of the termination.

Term of Agreement

The period of performance will be from the Effective Date of the Agreement through December 31, 2015.

Resolving Disagreements

Disputes shall be resolved pursuant to applicable provisions of the Business Rules for Intra-Governmental Transactions delineated in the Treasury Financial Manual, Vol. 1, Bulletin 2007-03, Section VII (Resolving Intra-Governmental Disputes and Major Differences).

Approvals and Contact Information

Point of Contact

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Signatures

HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

AGENCY OFFICIAL:

Signature:  Date: 8/8/11

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Agency: Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

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HHS Health Resources and Services Administration

AGENCY OFFICIAL:

Signature:  Date: AUG - 9 2011

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USDA Rural Development

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Signature:  Date: 7/28/11

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