

Press Release

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Health Centers Outpace Physician Office Practices in Electronic Health Record Adoption 69 Percent of Health Centers Using EHR

WASHINGTON and NEW YORK – A new data chart book titled, “Results from the 2010-11 Readiness for Meaningful Use of HIT and Patient Centered Medical Home Recognition Survey,” released today by the Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, provides unique insight into the status of electronic health record (EHR) and health information technology adoption among community health centers. Derived from a nationwide survey of health centers, the results showed that 69 percent of health centers have adopted EHRs, with 45 percent of them being fully electronic at all sites. This outpaces the 2010 EHR adoption rate among office-based physicians, estimated at 51.5% by the National Center for Health Statistics. Additionally, 81 percent of health centers currently *without* EHRs reported that they planned to implement one within the next 12 months.

“The results show significant progress in promoting the use of electronic health records in medically underserved communities,” said Peter Shin, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of the Geiger Gibson Program. “Implementing changes that significantly alter the way you deliver care can be daunting, but health centers are serious about being a gateway to high quality care, especially for those who can’t afford it.”

Under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH), the Medicare and Medicaid programs are authorized to provide incentives of up to \$44,000 and \$63,750 respectively, per eligible physician, for the adoption of EHRs that achieve Meaningful Use (MU) goals set forth by the federal government. The survey results show many health centers currently meet several of the core functional requirements for meaningful use incentives and 91% of all respondents intend on seeking Medicaid MU incentives within 2 years, with 37% expecting to qualify within six months.

The report also summarizes the progress to date on integrating clinical data systems and achieving patient centered medical home recognition.

“Health information technology holds the promise of helping us to improve the quality and efficiency of care.” said Julio Bellber, president and CEO of the RCHN Community Health Foundation. “The survey shows that adoption of HIT has been embraced as a health center priority.”

To access the policy research brief, click here:

http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/dhp_publications/pub_uploads/dhpPublication_6461F0DD-5056-9D20-3D7593CB6AE409B5.pdf.

About the Geiger Gibson / RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative

The Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health Policy, established in 2003 and named after human rights and health center pioneers Drs. H. Jack Geiger and Count Gibson, is part of the School of Public Health and Health Services at The George Washington University. It focuses on the history and contributions of health centers and the major policy issues that affect health centers, their communities, and the patients that they serve. Additional information about the Research Collaborative can be found online at www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/ggprogram or at www.rchnfoundation.org.

About the RCHN Community Health Foundation

The RCHN Community Health Foundation, founded in October 2005, is a not-for-profit foundation whose mission is to support community health centers through strategic investment, outreach, education, and cutting-edge health policy research. The only foundation in the country dedicated to community health centers, the Foundation builds on health centers' 40-year commitment to the provision of accessible, high quality, community-based healthcare services for underserved and medically vulnerable populations. The Foundation's gift to the Geiger Gibson program supports health center research and scholarship. For more information on RCHN CHF, visit www.rchnfoundation.org.

About the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services:

Established in July 1997, the School of Public Health and Health Services brought together three longstanding university programs in the schools of medicine, business, and education that we have since expanded substantially. Today, more than 1,100 students from nearly every U.S. state and more than 40 nations pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral-level degrees in public health. Our student body is one of the most ethnically diverse among the nation's private schools of public health. <http://sphhs.gwumc.edu/>