

California Community Clinics EHR Assessment and Readiness Project

THE CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (CHCF) AND THE COMMUNITY Clinics Initiative (CCI), a joint project of Tides and The California Endowment, have launched the *EHR Assessment and Readiness Project*. The goal is to improve the quality and health outcomes of California's safety-net population by informing community clinic leaders and policy makers about the benefits of using electronic health records (EHR). Specifically, the project will focus on an EHR technology assessment, community clinic and health center readiness factors, and implementation considerations.

Information technologies play a key role to improve the quality of health care within a community and across the United States. Institute of Medicine (IOM) studies have demonstrated the positive impact of electronic health records on the reduction of medical errors and the federal government has recently named a National Coordinator of Health Information Technology. It is clear that patient safety, health care quality (especially for populations with chronic diseases), efficiency, and cost savings can be improved through the effective use of clinical information technology.

Clinic EHR Adoption

Community clinics and health centers are a critical resource for patients and their communities. Although less than 5 percent of clinics have implemented an EHR, 47 percent of clinics surveyed either are considering or are in the process of EHR adoption. Those that have implemented report significant challenges and variable success.

While the technology alone cannot address all quality and efficiency problems, its adoption is associated with changes in how care is provided—together helping to transform health care and improve patient outcomes. For community clinics and health centers whose missions are to improve the health of their communities, the use of EHRs can support the best possible care by providing timely and actionable data.

Project Objectives

This project will equip clinics with the following tools:

- **Clinic Case Scenarios.** Detailed provider and patient scenarios that describe how an EHR would be used in the community clinic setting.

- **Assessment of Clinic Readiness.** Summary of considerations to evaluate readiness for EHR adoption, including organizational and technical capacity, clinical leadership, and implementation issues.
- **Assessment of Vendor Qualifications.** An EHR product assessment based on specified clinic functional needs, interoperability requirements, and other evaluation criteria.
- **EHR Forum.** Conference to provide clinics with the above tools and provide an opportunity to directly view and assess EHR product options.

Based on findings, the project hopes to identify strategies to accelerate and support sustainable adoption of EHR technology in the community clinic setting.

EHR Assessment Stakeholders

This project assembles several medical directors, executive directors, and IT directors from community clinics in California to participate in the development of the project tools for EHR assessment and adoption. The project also includes an advisory group of government leaders in health care and information technology to ensure coordination with EHR efforts on the federal and state levels.

Program Management

CHCF and CCI have selected Object Health to manage the process. Object Health is a West Coast-based management consulting group that assists health care organizations and communities with leveraging health information to improve operational efficiencies and clinical health outcomes.

CONTACT INFO



The **CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (CHCF)** is an independent philanthropy committed to improving California's health care delivery and financing systems and helping consumers make informed health care and coverage decisions.

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Community Clinics Initiative

Strong Clinics, Healthy Communities

The **Community Clinics Initiative (CCI)** is a unique collaboration between Tides and The California Endowment that supports community health clinics in California and is the largest grant making program of its kind in the United States. The long-term goal of CCI is to strengthen California's community clinic system to serve more patients and improve the quality of care, ultimately improving community health outcomes.

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