

## Regional Extension Center (REC) Questions & Answers

Greetings AeHN members and prospective members! The following questions and answers are typical of those we frequently address about membership and services. Please contact us to learn more.

**Is it difficult to join the AeHN?** Not at all – and for the months of July – August 2011, AeHN is waiving membership fees for primary care practices and critical access / rural hospitals eligible to receive REC incentive funds.

**Is there a separate cost to join the Health Information Exchange (HIE)?** Not at this time for eligible primary care organizations signing the REC agreement. There are two paths to HIE participation: 1) Executing the REC agreement and also the separate “HIE Addendum” or 2) Executing the HIE agreement, commonly called a data use agreement, separately.

**What are the REC incentives available to eligible primary care providers and critical access / rural hospitals?** Incentives are for technical services performed by AeHN vendors in support of the organization achieving meaningful use of their certified EHR and payable to such vendors on behalf of the organization. Up to \$3,000 per eligible primary care provider (\$30,000 cap) or \$18,000 per eligible critical access / rural hospital is available. Eligible technical services include: EHR Readiness Assessment, Selecting an EHR / Contracting with Vendor, Work Flow Design/Redesign, Training, Implementation Support, and IT Support.

**How does the REC incentive program differ from the CMS Medicare and Medicaid incentive program?** Collaborating with the State of Alaska, the REC can assist your organization in navigating CMS incentive program eligibility requirements and identify resources available. While the overarching goals of both the REC and CMS incentive programs are aligned – bringing organizations to meaningful use of health information technology utilizing a certified electronic health record, these programs are mutually exclusive of each other.

**Are there REC incentive program exclusions?** Yes. Personnel costs, supplies, travel, room and board, licenses, hardware and software purchases are specifically excluded from these services.

**Our practice, critical access / rural hospital doesn't have an EHR – why should I join AeHN?** AeHN partners can reduce your practice's burden of determining readiness to adopt health information technology as well as the evaluation of EHR software vendors based on the unique needs of your practice or hospital.

**What type of medical providers qualify for the REC incentive program?** Providers eligible for REC incentive services include primary care physicians (MD, DO) who practice medicine in family, general internal or pediatric medicine, or obstetrics and gynecology. In addition to the above primary care physicians, a primary care provider also includes the categories of nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, and physician assistants practicing in the above primary care settings.

**We have a large primary care practice – are we excluded from the REC incentive program?** Not necessarily. While the REC Incentive Program is geared toward primary care practices sized at ten (10)

providers or less, larger practices that service “Underserved” patients in certain settings may be eligible. AeHN evaluates eligibility on a practice-by-practice basis.

**Can specialty practices join the REC?** Absolutely. While not eligible for REC incentive payments, specialty practices can benefit from the use of AeHN’s vendor network and third-party objectivity. The major benefit is future connectivity to the HIE.

**How do I join AeHN?** Please contact Jim Landon at 866-966-9030 ext. 4 ([jim@ak-ehealth.org](mailto:jim@ak-ehealth.org)) or Georgiana Jorgensen at 866-966-9030 ext. 7 ([georgiana@ak-ehealth.org](mailto:georgiana@ak-ehealth.org)).

**I’ve joined AeHN – what are the next steps?** AeHN or one of our partners will contact you to conduct an assessment of your practice or critical access / rural hospital needs.

**My question isn’t shown here or not fully addressed. How do I learn more?** Contact us or visit <http://www.ak-ehealth.org/alaska-regional-extension-center> .