

February 20, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
Office of the Governor
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

We are writing you to urge your support for the disbursement of Federal Stimulus Health Information Technology funds to ACCEL (Access El Dorado) to implement exchange of clinical data among public and private providers.

ACCEL was formed in 2002 as an oversight group tasked with improving health care access for the safety net population in El Dorado County. Successful interventions that improved access also, in subsequent years, pointed to the need for enhanced data exchange among local providers to improve coordination of affordable, quality care. The ACCEL collaborative now spearheads El Dorado County's health information technology projects designed to electronically link rural public and private health agencies. Over the last four years ACCEL has made extraordinary progress building the foundational capabilities, relationships, and infrastructure necessary to launch a secure, multi-agency health information exchange (HIE). Since 2008, administrative case management protocols to ensure health care access for children have been shared online and ACCEL is now ready to expand to the exchange of clinical data.

Active engagement by the local agencies participating in ACCEL has made this progress possible. This includes participation from

- El Dorado County Department of Health Services (Public Health and Mental Health)
- Marshall Medical Center (hospital, Marshall Physician Services, rural clinic)
- Barton Healthcare System (hospital, Barton community clinic, Tahoe Family Physicians)
- Shingle Springs Tribal Health
- El Dorado County Community Health Center (FQHC)

Leveraging our substantial progress, ACCEL's HIE project is truly 'shovel ready.' We are currently working to select and implement appropriate, secure web-based technology to link participating agencies in an HIE that shares essential clinical data among El Dorado County providers (and electronic health records.) Importantly, this will include the capacity for disease surveillance, public health communicable disease reporting, and urgent community health alerts.

It is our goal to be at the forefront of the national effort to develop an interoperable system of health records that will optimize care for consumers within California and across the country. ACCEL, a recipient of grants and recognition for innovation from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, is prepared to

- Implement a fully operational HIE for El Dorado County that can link to interoperable systems at the regional, state, and national level.
- Deliver on the immediate economic promise of the stimulus effort through job retention and creation
- Contribute important findings regarding rural systems adoption, implementation strategy, and sustainability strategies that can help support expansion of HIEs across the nation.

We urge you to advocate on our behalf in the deployment of Federal Stimulus funds for California's health information technology development.

Sincerely,

Greg Bergner MD
Tahoe Family Physicians

Jon Lehrman MD
Marshall Physicians Service

Dick Derby
CFO, Barton Health System

Shannon Truesdell
COO, Marshall Medical

Jim Ellsworth
CEO, El Dorado County Community Health Center

Neda West
Director, Department of Health Services
El Dorado County

Beth Bodi
Executive Director, Shingle Springs Tribal Health Program



ACCEL Health Information Exchange (HIE): Request for Federal Stimulus funding

Background

ACCEL (ACCess El Dorado) is a northern California countywide health collaborative of public & private agencies dedicated to being a healthier community by uniting, maximizing, connecting, and focusing our health resources. Our efforts focus on vulnerable populations: children and the under- or un-insured.

ACCEL member organizations include:

- El Dorado County Department of Health Services, Public Health and Mental Health Divisions
- Barton Healthcare System (hospital, rural clinic, clinical practices)
- Marshall Medical Center (hospital, rural clinic & clinical practices)
- El Dorado County Community Health Center (FQHC)
- Shingle Springs Tribal Health Clinic.

For over 4 years, ACCEL has invested in foundational developments to promote community-based health information technology, specifically a health information exchange, to improve continuity, quality, and affordability of care across providers in the County. We have successfully addressed critical elements of infrastructure -- privacy and security policies and practices, pilot data exchange, electronic master patient index, chartered governance with legal data sharing agreements, etc – that position us to move swiftly towards clinical data exchange between community providers, health systems and the County Health Services Department.

Request

We seek stimulus funds for ACCEL's HIE project: a "*shovel ready*" implementation effort to commence in the second quarter of 2009. The anticipated completion date is December 31, 2010.

The majority of the requested funds are planned to support job retention and job creation in the following areas:

- Project managers with system reengineering and change management experience
- Technical system administrators
- Experienced trainers /change management
- Operations Quality Assurance
- Governance facilitator

Additionally, funds will contribute to the technology purchase and implementation costs of the HIE.

Stimulus fund request amounts are:

- \$700,000 in 2009
- \$700,000 in 2010

For more information, contact:

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