

# COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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February 17, 2009

Senator Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer,

We are writing you to urge your support for the disbursement of Federal Stimulus funds to ACCEL (Access El Dorado), the local collaborative spearheading El Dorado County's health information technology projects designed to electronically link rural public and private health agencies. Initiated as an oversight group to improve health care access for the safety net, ACCEL has, over the last four years, 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 safety net 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)

Because of the substantial progress towards implementing a fully operative, countywide ACCEL HIE, the project is truly 'shovel ready.' ACCEL is currently working to select and implement appropriate and secure web-based technology that will 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.

El Dorado County aims to be at the forefront of the national effort to develop an interoperable secure system of health records that will optimize care for consumers within California and across the country. ACCEL 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 behalf of ACCEL in the deployment of Federal Stimulus funds for California's health information technology development.

Sincerely,

Ron Briggs, Chairman  
El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

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

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### 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 requested funds requested 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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