

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD SECURITY

Through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, the federal government committed unprecedented resources to supporting the adoption and use of Electronic Health Records (EHR). It made available incentive payments totaling up to \$27 billion over 10 years (2011-2021), or as much as

\$44,000 (through Medicare) and \$63,750 (through Medicaid) per clinician. The Epi-News published on October 20, 2010 discussed more extensively regarding "Being a Meaningful User of Electronic Health Records". Please refer to this link <http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/repository/files/4/Vol-30-No-10-10-20-10-Meaningful-Use.pdf>.

Due to the Meaningful Use initiative, many area healthcare providers have switched to electronic health records as a way to reduce paper usage, increase efficiencies, and more importantly for health information exchange (HIE). While this move allows for Physicians to have easier access to patient records, it also increases security concerns with sensitive patient information. Washoe County has recognized this security concern within its own organization and is proud to invite private sector partners to participate on a project aimed at building secure infrastructure in both public and private industry.

Washoe County, along with Clark County, Carson City and the State of Nevada has been selected by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to participate in a **cyber security assessment**. The State of Nevada competed with many other states for the opportunity to have the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security (CIAS) perform a cyber security assessment for Nevada.

The goal of the assessment is to strengthen and improve the region's ability to safeguard information resources. Washoe County's Chief Information Management Officer, Cory Casazza, says he is looking forward to the training since the internet touches everything the County has to offer stating, "All of us, from law enforcement, fire and rescue, health services to the financial, utility, and service sectors will be severely impacted if access to, or reliability of, information flowing across our networks should suddenly be unavailable or degraded. Recognizing this, we're going to strengthen and improve our ability to safeguard the information resources essential to our community."

Administered by the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security (CIAS), an extension of the University of Texas – San Antonio, the program consists of a 14-month training and exercise program focused on community cyber security prevention, response and recovery. The program crosses over both public and private sectors. The goal is collaborative and secure community infrastructures which have shown to be more stable.

This year long CIAS program will launch with an introductory meeting on **Tuesday, February 28th at 8:30am at the Regional Emergency Operations Center**. Both public and private sectors as well as the general public will benefit from improved security measures. Aaron Kenneston, Washoe County Emergency Manager would like to personally extend the invitation to participate in this community program to local Healthcare partners, specifically management or office staff that would work with electronic health records.

If you are interested in participation, please RSVP to Christina Conti, Washoe County Health District Public Health Emergency Response Coordinator at 775-325-8067 or cconti@washoecounty.us by noon, February 27th, 2012.