



California Department of Insurance
Insurance Commissioner, Steve Poizner

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More than \$6 Million in Grants Awarded for Innovative Projects to Improve Health IT, Targeted at Underserved Areas

The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), California Department of Insurance (CDI), and UnitedHealth Group/PacifiCare of California (UHG) today announced more than \$6 million in grants aimed at promoting health information technology, medical education, disease prevention and coordinated care programs -- all focused on underserved populations and improvements in California's health care delivery system.

"Improving health technology, especially in rural and underserved areas, is a critical component of ensuring Californians have access to quality care and can help save money," said Cindy Ehnes, Director of the California Department of Managed Health Care. "These grants will enhance local efforts that support the goals of comprehensive health care reform, including promoting healthier lifestyles and making health care more efficient to lower costs."

The awards, the first in four funding cycles over the next three years, are part of a total of \$25 million in grants from the \$50 million charitable commitment negotiated by the DMHC and CDI to ensure that Californians gained some public benefit from the 2005 merger of UHG with PacifiCare of California. Projects funded from the remaining \$25 million of the charitable commitment include expansion of medical education programs and support of a new California telehealth network. The charitable commitment was made by UHG in addition to the establishment of a \$200 million dollar investment program to support California's health care infrastructure and various health care programs.

"Throughout the country, technology is improving patient care while reducing health care costs," said Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner. "These investments today will pay off for patients tomorrow, and help keep California's focus on both affordability and quality."

The awards are based on a competitive bid process, and 15 projects were funded in the first cycle. Locations range from Shasta County in the north to San Diego County in the south, and individual award amounts range from \$100,000 to \$740,000. Project examples include equipment and software to create electronic health records in local hospitals or clinics; telehealth information systems between remote medical locations and larger health facilities; and obesity, diabetes and lifestyle programs.

"UnitedHealth Group and PacifiCare are committed to investing in a healthier California," said David Hansen, CEO, Pacific Region of UnitedHealthcare. "We do this by offering products and services that address affordability, access, and quality needs for all Californians, and also through grants to community health organizations that will help improve the health care delivery system for everyone, including underserved populations."

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Applications for the next funding cycle are due by February 18, 2008. A description of the grant program and current application criteria are available on the Web sites of the DMHC (www.dmhc.ca.gov), the CDI (www.insurance.ca.gov), and UGH (www.unitedhealthgroup.com).

Grants awarded were:

- \$360,000 to the Ukiah-based Alliance for Rural Community Health to implement electronic health records in six federally qualified health centers in Mendocino County.
- \$100,000 to Centro La Familia Advocacy Services Inc. in Fresno to expand community health outreach activities related to healthful eating and lifestyles via its Promotora program.
- \$350,000 to Orange-based Children's Health Initiative of Orange County to implement a Web-based application and tracking system for children's health programs and other state-sponsored services.
- \$367,250 to Darin M. Camarena Health Centers Inc. in Madera to purchase computer equipment that will enhance clinical information management, billing and organizational service growth.
- \$664,688 to Glendale Adventist Medical Center to help implement a rural telepharmacy project that will enable rural hospitals and clinics to better comply with pharmacy standards, improve quality and reduce medication errors.
- \$187,000 to Willows-based Glenn Medical Center to purchase new equipment to allow digital recording and transmission of diagnostic studies, which will help improve speed and efficiency of rural patient care.
- \$360,000 to the Institute for Healthcare Advancement in La Habra to support implementation of electronic medical record (EMR) and practice management systems in a pediatric community clinic serving Los Angeles and Orange counties.
- \$593,720 to the Northridge Hospital Foundation to enhance and expand its school-based obesity- and diabetes-prevention program.
- \$740,000 to Planned Parenthood Mar Monte/Fresno to establish a response center serving a 27-county area using IP Telephony.
- \$361,684 to Ukiah-based Redwood MedNet to establish an information network allowing clinics and hospitals in Mendocino, Lake and Northern Sonoma counties to share patient and medical information.
- \$500,000 to Ridgecrest Regional Hospital to expand telehealth and telemedicine capabilities to additional rural care providers.
- \$200,000 to Shasta Community Health Center in Redding to complete the implementation of its electronic medical records system.
- \$159,155 to Fremont-based Tri City Health Center to upgrade its telephone system and improve its ability to serve its low-income, ethnically diverse patient population.
- \$705,184 to the Vista Community Clinic to purchase and implement its electronic medical records system.
- \$731,070 to the University of California San Diego Department of Emergency Medicine to develop the San Diego Safety Net Health Information Exchange, an integrated information system between community clinics and hospitals.

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