

**Project Title:** Accessing the Cutting Edge: Implementing Technology to Transform Quality in SE Kern  
**Principal Investigator:** Nocella, Kiki, Ph.D., M.H.A.  
**Organization:** Tehachapi Hospital  
**Mechanism:** RFA: HS05-013: Limited Competition for AHRQ Transforming Healthcare Quality through Information Technology (THQIT)  
**Grant Number:** UC1 HS 016146  
**Project Period:** 09/05 – 05/09, Including No-Cost Extension  
**AHRQ Funding Amount:** \$1,484,361  
**Summary Status as of:** December 2008

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**Strategic Goal:** To develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to improve health care decisionmaking through the use of integrated data and knowledge management.

**Business Goal:** Implementation and Use

**Summary:** The purpose of the project is to increase health quality in California’s rural Southeast Kern County by implementing health information technology (IT), including electronic health records (EHRs), health information exchange (HIE), tele-ophthalmology, and retinal imaging. EHRs have been implemented in three rural health centers (RHCs) and two provider offices, which will allow these practices to electronically access patients’ medical records. HIE is currently in the “production” mode, and its implementation will allow the clinical data exchange between different health care information systems to facilitate effective and efficient patient care. A “browser model” is being designed for the primary care providers who have not implemented EHRs in order to facilitate their participation and provide them access to the required health information of patients and the admission/discharge/transfer (ADT) feeds of HIE. Research is being conducted by surveying 200 participants in order to determine if tele-ophthalmology is a practical option in rural settings.

### Specific Aims

- Implement ambulatory EHR, including clinical data repository and master patient index. **(Achieved)**
- Develop and implement HIE in a variety of care settings. **(Achieved)**
- Implement tele-ophthalmology and retinal imaging services. **(Achieved)**

**2008 Activities:** EHRs have been implemented in three RHCs and two provider offices, along with technical support and training provided to the staff. A technician team was formed to develop standards, call procedures, and policies. The browser model is being upgraded, and the HIE system has 30,699 individual demographic records. The staff in the practices participating in HIE have been trained on the HIE “demo site.” A Wikimedia site has been established for the documentation purpose. The team worked toward completing customized community-based HIE, which includes finalizing lab interfaces, interfacing with pharmacy data, and developing data entry tables. For tele-ophthalmology and retinal imaging, survey data have been entered into Excel and will be uploaded to SPSS for next quarter.

**Preliminary Impact and Findings:** None available at this time.

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### Selected Outputs

A community-centric personal health record (PHR) product, MyHealthKeePer, was produced.

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**Grantee’s Most Recent Self-Reported Quarterly Status:** Technical support and training are provided to the five clinics where the EHRs are implemented. Progress is being made to complete the browser model “upgrade” and provide appropriate training to clinicians. Surveys are being coded and entered into Excel in order to conduct statistical analysis in SPSS.

**Milestones:** Progress is mostly on track.

**Budget:** Somewhat under spent, approximately 5 to 20 percent.