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the enormous potential in shared systems," says **John Stobo, MD**, senior VP for health sciences and services at **UCSF**, which will host the program. He says the public UC system is uniquely positioned to study the appropriateness and effectiveness of treatments for breast cancer, a disease that strikes 200,000 women annually and results in 40,000 deaths each year. More than \$20 billion is spent annually in the U.S. screening and treating the disease, says the **American Cancer Society**. The ATHENA research is being supported by a \$5.3 million UC grant and a \$4.8 million donation from the **Safeway Foundation**.

» **Omni IPA Medical Group in Stockton** says it will shed its licensed **Medicare** product, called **Medcore Health Plan**, and transition its 2,100 senior members to **SCAN**, a nonprofit **Long Beach**-based insurer known for its innovative approaches to managing the health of an aging population. **Kirit Patel, MD**, president and CEO of Omni, says members will transition to SCAN transparently, with no change in benefits and access to the same physicians and hospitals. By partnering with SCAN the 400-physician group can "focus on what we love doing most— keeping seniors healthy and providing care when they need it," Patel says. **Dave Schmidt**, president and CEO of SCAN, says he welcomes the opportunity to administer services for seniors in the **San Joaquin Valley** who will receive some added perks such as a 24-hour live help line and annual "Straight Talk" community forums with HMO executives. SCAN, which pioneered a model Medicare pilot program for the frail

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Two CA Health Centers Awarded \$1.86M In EHR Stimulus Funds

Federal grant for IT innovation goes to AltaMed in L.A.

BAKERSFIELD— **Clinica Sierra Vista**, which started as a storefront clinic for migrant farm workers in the southern **San Joaquin Valley** town of **Weedpatch** and grew into a network of 24 community health centers, is one of two California organizations awarded \$1.86 million in federal stimulus funds to implement an electronic health record.

"We're surprised, thrilled, and jumping to the task," says **Stephen Schilling**, CEO of the private nonprofit group that has become a model for rural healthcare delivery by providing medical, dental, and behavioral health services for a large low-income population in **Kern, Fresno, and Inyo** counties.

Schilling says the staff will explore specifics of the grant, select a vendor, and prepare to launch a site-by-site rollout of the technology, starting with its **Fresno** health center where an IT team will test the system and train staff. "It's a high impact stimulus grant, which means we have to move quickly."

Family Health Centers of San Diego also received \$1.86 million as part of an EHR grant package of \$22.6 million distributed to 18 health centers across the country under the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**. The funds are for large health centers and multi-site clinics to use in developing IT tools to expand services for a growing number of low income, unemployed, and uninsured individuals.

In San Diego, the funds will be used to integrate patient records across the second largest health center network in the nation that includes 11 primary care sites, three dental clinics, a stand-alone HIV clinic, and three mobile medical units that provide healthcare services at 75 community locations, says spokeswoman **Dale Bankhead**. There are over 600,000 individuals without healthcare in San Diego County, 150,000 of them children.

To celebrate the EHR grant and other achievements, the consortia invited numerous sponsors, including **Anthem Blue Cross, Health Net, Sharp Health Plan, Care 1st HMO, and Molina Healthcare**, to attend a *Spirit of the Barrio* luncheon for tamales and speeches.

The third stimulus IT grant in California was \$746,250 awarded to **AltaMed Health Services Corp.** in **Los Angeles** for technology innovation. State health centers were previously awarded \$109 million to buy equipment, improve clinic facilities, and adopt or expand use of health IT, along with \$48.1 million to recruit or retrain staff members in "health professional shortage areas." — **JOHN LEIGHTY**



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