

NEWSLINE



A beach on the North Shore of Long Island, where a major physician EHR subsidy program is getting underway.

STARK EXEMPTION

Jumping Headlong Into Physician Subsidies

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF RELAXED federal physician subsidy rules, Great Neck, N.Y.-based North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System, a 13-hospital delivery system, will offer approximately 5,800 affiliated physicians subsidies of up to \$40,000 each over five years to implement remotely hosted electronic health records systems. That's in addition to the \$44,000 in federal incentives each physician could be eligible for under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The subsidies are part of a \$400 million initiative to automate inpatient and outpatient records

throughout North Shore's service area. The overwhelming majority of North Shore's affiliated physicians do not have an EHR, says John Bosco, CIO. North Shore will offer remotely hosted EHR software from Chicago-based Allscripts. The subsidies will cover software purchase, implementation, training, hosting and ongoing support. The delivery system also has purchased about 1,200 licenses for employed physicians.

Under the relaxed federal Stark Exemption, North Shore cannot subsidize hardware, such as computing devices to access the EHR and wireless infrastructure. Allscripts will

recommend the most appropriate hardware for a particular practice, but physicians can buy the hardware of their choosing. Allscripts recently entered into a strategic partnership with hardware vendor Dell Inc., Round Rock, Texas.

North Shore will offer a 50% subsidy for physicians that implement EHRs that can communicate with labs and hospitals. The subsidy will increase to 85% if physicians share with North Shore de-identified data on quality and performance measures. North Shore's goal is to build a database of best treatment practices.

—Joseph Goedert