JCCC is a leader in HITECH training

U.S. community colleges are expected to train 10,500 students each year for the next five years to meet requirements by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act[1], which mandates that every U.S. citizen have an electronic health record by 2014. JCCC is poised to do its part.

JCCC received $292,247 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (aka stimulus act) from April 2010-2012 to implement two components of the health information technology workforce training that will be needed in physicians offices and medical centers to meet the 2014 deadline.

Starting in September, JCCC will offer six-month training for two career roles – 1. technical/software support staff and 2. practice workflow and information management redesign specialists.

JCCC is one of 17 community colleges in the Midwest consortium, headed by Cuyahoga Community College, responsible for delivering HIT training. Each consortium across the United States will be required to deliver training in six career roles that will serve to implement and support electronic health records. In addition to the two roles listed above, designated career roles are clinical/practitioner consultants, implementation support specialists, implementation managers and trainers.

Eventually coursework in all six career roles will be available to community college students nationwide through the regional consortiums – either online or in the classroom. As the only Kansas community college to be part of the Midwest consortium, JCCC is partnering with Hutchinson Community College and also with Metropolitan Community College on the Missouri side to deliver training this fall.

This fall, JCCC will offer its two training programs through Continuing Education, with credit available in spring 2011, according to Dr. Bill Osborn, associate vice president, Instruction. Right now there are no prerequisites, although HIT is expected to attract people who have either an IT or health care background.

The greatest need for HIT workers will be with office-based physicians and rural medical centers.
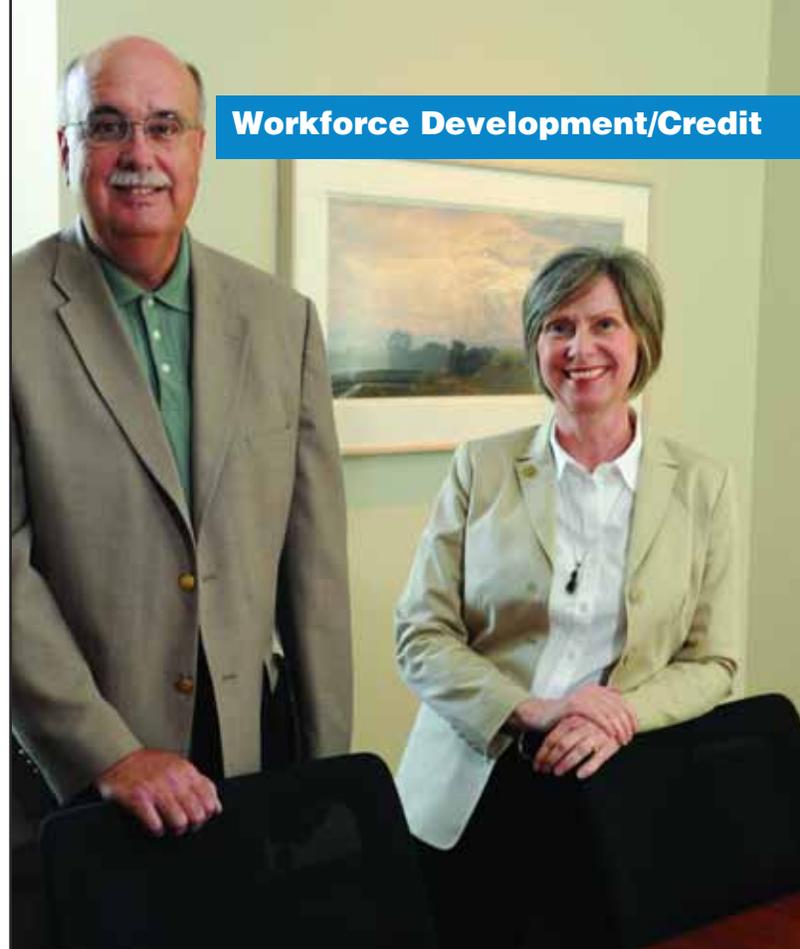
Dr. Bill Osborn, associate vice president, Instruction, and Darcy McGrath, dean, Workforce Development and Operations, are overseeing initial development of HITECH grant classes.

Because of the tight deadline for training HIT workers, Darcy McGrath, dean, Workforce Development and Operations, relays an apropos analogy she heard at a meeting of the Kansas Foundation for Medical Care, authorized by the HITECH Act as the regional center for support of electronic health records in physician offices.

"We were told that there are a lot of agencies involved in the federally funded HIT workforce training effort – the regional center, curriculum developers, training deliverers and assessors. We are all on the plane together heading down a runway, and while we are heading down the runway, we are also building the plane," McGrath said.

The community colleges are considered "deliverers." The five universities who received stimulus funds to create curriculum are "developers."

JCCC students who complete either of the two six-month programs will receive a certificate of completion. In the meantime, Northern Virginia Community College has been awarded a grant to develop a competency examination.

Deb Elder has been hired as JCCC's HITECH grant program director by a committee comprised of JCCC faculty and staff, representation from MCC and Hutchinson, and the Kansas regional extension center for support. For more information, contact Elder at 913-469-8500, ext. 4270, or delder6@jccc.edu. **Im**

1 Workforce Report 2010, Joseph Conn, Modern Healthcare May 24, 2010