Attachment 5

Faculty Focus Group Protocols and Consent Information

<u>**Faculty Email Invitation**</u>

[DATE]

Dear [FACULTY NAME],

In an effort to gain knowledge about the Health Information Technology (IT) Workforce program being implemented at [INSERT CC NAME] and other community colleges across the United States, we are asking you to participate in the Health IT Workforce Program Evaluation. This study is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) on behalf of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

We are setting up a focus group discussion for instructors who teach courses for the Health IT academic programs and would greatly appreciate your participation. The 90 minute meeting will take place online by way of web-conference with approximately 10 instructors attending.   The goal of this dynamic group discussion is to gather information in the form of opinions and viewpoints from you and other Health IT faculty members on your experiences regarding the program. Your feedback and insight will help ONC to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program in preparing a well-trained workforce in the Health IT industry. As a token of our appreciation you will receive [INSERT INCENTIVE DESCRIPTION].

Please call [INSERT PHONE NUMBER] or e-mail [INSERT PROJECT EMAIL] to indicate your availability. Provide only your first name and your unique ID number [INSERT NORC SUID] along with the dates and times you are available. We will follow-up with a confirmation email with instructions, a project information sheet and the schedule.

Confidentiality. Please keep in mind that NORC maintains strict confidentiality standards. Your responses will be reported in summary form only and will be safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Your individual data will not be shared with your school, employer or anyone else. Your participation in this group interview is voluntary.

Background Information. The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act of 2009 created the Workforce Program to support the development of Health IT education programs for the purpose of facilitating the creation of a robust workforce dedicated to the rapid and widespread adoption and use of health information technology. Additional information on Health IT Workforce and other HITECH programs may be found here: http://healthit.hhs.gov.

NORC at the University of Chicago has a long history of conducting high-quality social science research to inform public policy and promote the public interest.

Contact Us. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please e-mail us at [EMAIL ADDR] or call our toll-free number at [STUDY TOLL FREE]. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call the NORC IRB Administrator; toll free, at 866-309-0542.

Again, thank you for your time and we look forward to further contact with you.
Sincerely,

Kristina Lowell, Ph.D.
Project Director

NORC at the University of Chicago

<u>**Faculty Email Invitation – Follow-up**</u>

[DATE]

Dear [FACULTY NAME],

Hopefully you have received our previous email inviting you to participate in a focus group discussion for instructors who teach courses for the Health IT academic programs at community colleges across the nation. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this very important meeting and would like you to hear from you soon.

Please call [INSERT PHONE NUMBER] or e-mail [INSERT PROJECT EMAIL] to indicate your availability. Provide only your first name and your unique ID number [INSERT NORC SUID] along with the dates and times you are available. We will follow-up with a confirmation email with instructions, a project information sheet and the schedule.

The 90 minute meeting will take place online by way of web-conference with approximately 10 instructors attending.   The goal of this dynamic group discussion is to gather information in the form of opinions and viewpoints from you and other Health IT faculty members on your experiences regarding the program.

As a reminder, NORC at the University of Chicago (www.norc.org) on behalf of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (http://healthit.hhs.gov) is conducting a study to gain knowledge about the Health Information Technology (IT) Workforce Program being implemented at [INSERT NAME] and other community colleges offering the program. Your feedback and insight will help ONC to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program in preparing a well-trained workforce in the Health IT industry.

Confidentiality. Please keep in mind that NORC maintains strict confidentiality standard in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Your individual data will not be shared with your school, employer or anyone else. Your participation in this group interview is voluntary.

Contact Us. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please e-mail us at [EMAIL ADDR] or call our toll-free number at [STUDY TOLL FREE]. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call the NORC IRB Administrator; toll free, at 866-309-0542.

Again, thank you for your time and we look forward to further contact with you.
Sincerely,

Kristina Lowell, Ph.D.
Project Director
NORC at the University of Chicago

Project Information Sheet - Faculty

TITLE OF STUDY: Health Information Technology Workforce Program Evaluation
Project Director: Kristina Lowell, Ph.D.
Phone Number: [INSERT PHONE NUMBER]

You are asked to take part in a research study being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) – a not-for-profit company that conducts research in the public interest. NORC has been contracted by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation on their IT Professionals in Health Care Program (we will refer to this as the Workforce Program). An essential piece of this evaluation is to assess the Health IT academic and training programs that are being implemented by community colleges and universities across the nation.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research study is to further investigate the experiences of faculty who are teaching courses in the Health IT academic program through focus group interviews. This qualitative research is designed to complement the existing surveys and to aid in the understanding of how effective the Health IT academic program is in achieving its goals.

Procedures:
Approximately 10 teachers will participate in an online group discussion by way of web-conferencing led by an NORC researcher. This discussion will be guided by the moderator so that topics relevant to the instructors' experiences with health IT academic programs are explored in detail. There will be opportunities for all participants to voice any comments or concerns they have about any aspect of the program or its impact on their lives. This group session will be recorded and transcribed to help us remember what is said during the discussion and to make sure comments are captured accurately. Your participation in the Focus Group discussion will last for approximately 90 minutes.

Risks and Discomforts:
You may choose not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable with answering. You may choose to end your participation in this discussion at any time.

Benefits:
Your statements will be used to identify areas for possible improvement to the Health IT academic programs. They will also be used to better understand the needs and experiences of faculty members as well as the students. The goal of the study is to understand how to better meet your needs as a teacher in the Health IT programs and to address the needs of the students as well. Your answers may also be used to make improvements to the management and implementation of the Health IT curriculum.

Confidentiality:
No participants will be identified by name in any report or publication of this study or its results. Your responses and comments will be reported in summary form only and your data is safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. NORC is obligated under law to protect your identity. Your comments will remain absolutely confidential, meaning we will not share what you specifically have to say with anyone. Your responses will in no way impact your current employment, your ability to attain employment, your education, career or any other life

event. Additionally, as a participant of this group, you are bound by this obligation not to share information that you hear during this meeting with anyone outside of the group.

Recordings and transcriptions that contain references to your name, as well as lists of participants, will be stored securely by NORC and will not be shared outside of the NORC research team. All electronic files will be stored on NORC's secure servers, and if paper files are created they will be stored under lock and key or shredded after use.

Right to refuse or to withdraw from the study:
Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty, or losing benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. NORC has the right to stop your participation in the study at any time.

Offer to Answer Questions:
You have the opportunity to ask, and to have answered, all your questions about this research. If you have other questions, or if a research-related injury occurs, you may call the project director, Dr. Kristina Lowell, at [INSERT PHONE NUMBER].

Institutional Review Board Approval:
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of Human Subjects at NORC. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call the NORC IRB Administrator, toll free, at 866-309-0542.

Health IT Workforce Program Evaluation
Faculty Focus Group Guide

Online meeting by way of web-conference

- **Overview, 5 minutes**
- **Consent Statement, 5 minutes**
- **Group Introductions, 5 minutes**
- **Group Discussion, 70 minutes**
- **Conclusion and wrap-up, 5 minutes**

I. Overview *(5 minutes)*

Welcome, everyone, to this important meeting and thank you for taking the time to participate in this online discussion.

My name is _____, with NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) – a not-for-profit company that conducts research in the public interest. NORC has been contracted by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation on their IT Professionals in Health Care Program. (We will refer to it as the Workforce Program.)   An essential piece of this evaluation is to assess the Health IT academic and training programs that are being implemented by community colleges and universities across the nation.

We have asked you and other instructors affiliated with the community colleges participating in the Workforce Program to participate in an online dynamic group discussion to share your experiences, opinions, thoughts and feedback regarding the program. The goal of this meeting is to gather information that will help to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program in preparing a well-trained workforce in the Health IT industry. Your participation, insight and feedback will help ONC refine the curriculum materials and implementation for a more effective and robust program.

Before we begin the discussion I'd like to take just a few minutes to make sure everyone here is clear about the protocol and objectives for today's meeting.

I will be facilitating the meeting today. My role is to ask questions that will encourage discussion and facilitate a good exchange of opinions and ideas from everyone here. I will make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak, keep us focused and on topic. It is my goal to provide a safe, neutral and secure environment for you to talk freely and openly express your opinions, thoughts and viewpoints.

Your role as a participant is to answer the questions as honestly as possible. You might want to jot down your thoughts on a piece of paper in case you get distracted when others speak. You may provide a new idea or response for the group to discuss, expand on another's answer, or disagree, respectfully of course. Most important to the success of

the discussion is to hear as many views on the subject as possible. We prefer for the discussion to evolve into a dynamic and interactive conversation among all of you.

II. Consent Statement *(5 minutes)*

Now I would like to take a few minutes to review the Project Information Sheet that was emailed to you. Approximately 10 instructors will participate in today's meeting. The meeting will last for approximately 90 minutes. This group session will be recorded and transcribed to help us remember what is said during the discussion and to make sure comments are captured accurately but without real names or other identifying information. Please bear in mind that even if you previously agree to be taped you do not have to respond to a particular question if you feel uncomfortable saying it on tape. Only NORC researchers assigned to this study will be listening to the recordings and will use them for analysis and to help write a report about what this group and others had to say.

NORC is obligated under law to protect your identity and will not include your name or anything that identifies you in any report we write. Your responses and comments will be reported in summary form only and your data are safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Your comments will remain absolutely confidential, meaning we will not share what you specifically have to say with anyone. Additionally, as a participant of this group, you are bound by this obligation not to share information that you hear during this meeting with anyone outside of the group.

Finally, I will remind you that your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty, or losing benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. Your responses will in no way impact your current employment or your ability to attain employment in the future. You may refrain from answering questions and choose to end your participation in this discussion at any time.

Does anyone have any questions? If you should have any questions during or after the discussion or if a research-related injury occurs, you may call the project director, Dr. Kristina Lowell at [301-634-9488].

Does everyone agree to participate?
Does everyone agree to be recorded?

III. Introductions *(5 minutes)*

Let's take a few minutes to introduce ourselves to each other. Please tell us your first name only, what health IT courses you taught, and at what community college. I'll start. My name is _____. While I am not working directly in the field of health IT, my professional expertise is in the field of [insert field of study].

Do you have any questions? Let's begin.

A.   Topic: Evaluation of Program Courses and Materials

First, let's talk about the courses that you teach as part of the program as well as the course materials.

approx 25 minutes

1) Recruitment
   a. To start the conversation, we thought it would be helpful for each of you to provide a brief description of your teaching and professional background, how long you have been teaching at the college level, any experience you have working in the field of Health IT, etc.
   b. How did you learn about the Workforce program? Prior to the beginning of this program, were you already teaching at your current institution? If not, why did you decide to teach courses as part of the Workforce program?

2) Courses
   a. Think about each of the courses you taught. From your vantage point, do you think the courses fit together to form a coherent program targeted to one of the six Workforce roles? If not, do you have any ideas on what could unite the courses better?
   b. Do you think this Program is sufficiently preparing students for getting and keeping health IT jobs in the current marketplace? If not, why not?   If so, in what specific ways?
   c. If you could participate in designing the program's curriculum, are there any courses you would add that are not already offered? What classes would you eliminate?

3) Curriculum Materials
   a. Overall, how would you describe the usefulness of the materials produced by the Curriculum Development Centers?
      i. Did you download materials from the curriculum website? Was the website easy to access and navigate? Were you able to find everything you needed without much effort?
      ii. Can you provide a few suggestions that the Curriculum Development Centers can use to improve the materials?
   b. Did you use materials of your own for your classes? If so, how did they fill any gaps you observed in the official Program materials?
   c. Did you get any feedback from your students regarding the materials? If so, what were their overall impressions?

B. **Topic: Needs of Employers**

We'd like to switch gears a bit and discuss the needs of employers in the health IT industry.

approx 20 minutes

1) To what extent is there a relationship between potential employers in your local or regional market and your college?
2) Has your college fostered any degree of relationship or communication between potential employers and your school's instructors and administrators?
    a. If so, how?
    b. If not, can you provide suggestions on how faculty and students can stay informed of particular needs in the health IT workforce and how they are changing over time?
    c. Do you think this type of relationship is important in preparing a well-trained workforce in the Health IT industry? Why or why not?

C. **Topic: Overall Thoughts and Recommendations**

Now I'd like to ask you for your overall thoughts of your experience in the program as well as suggestions and recommendations for improving the program.

approx 25 minutes

1) Overall Thoughts
    a. Thinking about the program overall, can you identify any gaps or problems with the curriculum, course materials, or anything else?
    b. How does the Workforce Program experience compare with the experience teaching in similar teaching situations?
    c. In general, to what extent did you receive support from your consortium lead? Have you been satisfied with the degree of communications between your school administration and the consortium lead?
    d. To what extent do you feel your college has been able to attract well-qualified students?

2) Recommendations
    a. What has been the best aspect of the program?
    b. What has been the worst aspect of the program?
    c. What changes, if any, would you make to improve the program experience for faculty? For students?

V. Conclude *(5 minutes)*

This concludes our group session. Does anyone have any questions? On behalf of NORC and ONC, I'd like to thank you again for participating in this stimulating group discussion. If you have any questions later on please feel free to contact us either by email or phone. [INSERT STUDY EMAIL AND PHONE].