The nation has made great strides towards a technologically advanced health care system that offers improved quality, safety, and efficiency. However, there remain challenges and barriers to the adoption of electronic health records and other forms of health information technology (health IT).

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology has funded the Strategic Health IT Advanced Research Projects (SHARP) program to directly confront these challenges.

The SHARP program supports the discovery of "breakthrough" research findings that will accelerate the nationwide use of health IT and will support dramatic improvements in health care.

About the SHARP Program

SHARP program grants have been awarded to four universities and health care organizations that are leading the way in health IT research and innovation. Each awardee has received $15 million to lead a large collaborative of diverse health care stakeholders, conducting research in one of the following areas:

1. **Security and Health Information Technology**
   Goals: Develop technologies and policies to increase security safeguards and reduce risk; develop technologies to build and protect public trust

2. **Patient-Centered Decision-Making Support**
   Goals: Use the power of health IT to integrate and support doctors' reasoning and decision-making as they care for patients

3. **Health Care Application and Network Design**
   Goals: Create new and improved system designs to achieve information exchange and ensure privacy and security of electronic health information

4. **Secondary Use of EHR Information**
   Goals: Develop strategies for using information stored in electronic health records for improving the overall quality of health care while maintaining the privacy and security of protected health information

To accelerate health IT adoption, the universities and health care organizations will also work with technology developers, vendors, and health care providers to apply their findings to the practice of medicine.