

## Altarum Institute to add 25 Ann Arbor jobs due to \$19.6 million health records grant

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Ann Arbor-based [Altarum Institute](#), a nonprofit that focuses on health care research and consulting, has received a [\\$19.6 million federal grant](#) to help create and manage a new statewide organization designed to improve adoption of electronic medical records.

Backed by a coalition of 13 major health care organizations throughout the state, including the [University of Michigan Health System](#), Altarum will use the grant to help establish the [Michigan Center for Effective IT Adoption](#) (M-CEITA).

As part of the deal, Altarum plans to **add about 25 jobs** to its headquarters in Ann Arbor, where the nonprofit employs between 90 and 100 workers. The organization, which has 300 employees nationwide, estimated that the grant would lead to another 75 jobs throughout the state.

**Dan Armijo**, Altarum's director of information and technology strategies, said the M-CEITA would help doctors identify and purchase the best electronic medical record technology for their individual practices.

"The marketplace is fairly complex," Armijo said. "We are basically here to help the physician community navigate that complexity."

Indeed, the health care industry's sluggish adoption of electronic medical records software is often attributed to confusion over a wide range of options and to the high cost of implementing new systems.

Doctors typically understand the need to adopt new records technology, which can help avoid prescription errors and diagnostic mistakes.

"It's a tough space," said **Ken Nisbet**, executive director of U-M's [Technology Transfer Office](#), whose health care records spinoffs include Ann Arbor-based firms [Cielo](#) [MedSolutions](#) and [MedHub](#). "The need has been recognized for decades, to be honest."

The \$19.6 million grant - delivered through the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology** - will help Altarum provide consulting and advice to doctors who need help with technology decisions.

“These are small business owners and many of them lack the resources to thoroughly evaluate their options and make good decisions,” Armijo said.

The 13 organizations collaborating with Altarum include the **Michigan Health and Hospital Association**, the **Michigan Primary Care Association**, **Michigan State University** and **Wayne State University**.

Armijo said the grant would help provide resources to at least 6,000 of Michigan’s 17,000 primary care providers.

“That’s a pretty significant activity,” he said.

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