

Dear HRSA Grantee,

On July 28, 2010, the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Records (EHR) Incentive Programs Final Rule was released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) (CMS-0033-F, Federal Register, Volume 75, Number 144, Page 44314)<sup>1</sup>. Since the release of the final rule, there have been new administrative actions taken by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) and CMS that will make it easier for eligible professionals and hospitals to qualify for incentive payments under this program.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), CMS, and the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) recognize this transformational opportunity to improve our healthcare delivery system. HRSA, CMS, and ONC are aligned in their goals of supporting providers in achieving this goal. Both ONC and HRSA offer sources of technical assistance to help provider achieve this goal. ONC has established 62 health information technology Regional Extension Centers (RECs) that offer technical assistance, guidance, and information on best practices to support and accelerate health care providers' efforts to become meaningful users of electronic health records (EHR). Each of the 62 RECs serves a defined geographic area across the country, providing coverage in virtually all of the United States. RECs serve as independent resources to specifically help primary care providers, especially those serving underserved populations, successfully implement health information technology. For more information and to find your local REC, please visit <http://healthit.hhs.gov/programs/rec>.

HRSA has provided grants to support health centers in their purchase of certified electronic health record systems. Additionally, in 1993, HRSA established Health Center Controlled Networks (HCCNs) to promote the use of health information technology by providing management, financial, technology and clinical support services to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). There are currently over 60 Networks established throughout the U.S. Networks support a range of health care providers but have particular experience and expertise in supporting community health centers and offer services to providers across multiple geographical locations. HRSA also provides additional resources including toolkits, guides, webinars focused on meaningful use, and reference tools to assist in the adoption and implementation of EHRs. All of these resources can be downloaded from <http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit>.

Eligible professionals (EPs) practicing in ambulatory settings are eligible for EHR incentive payments of up to \$63,750 through the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program or up to \$44,000 through the Medicare EHR Incentive Program. In order to qualify for the first year of payment under the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, providers who meet the Medicaid patient volume criteria need only to attest to having adopted, purchased, or upgraded to certified EHR technology. This means that they have a financial and/or legal commitment to certified EHR technology but do not necessarily need to have it implemented as yet. EPs participating in the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program will not be required to meet the criteria for Meaningful Use until their second and subsequent participation years, and, unlike the Medicare program- where providers who fail to demonstrate that they are meaningful EHR users may be subject to penalties beginning in 2014- there are no penalties under Medicaid for failure to demonstrate

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-17207.pdf>

meaningful use by 2015<sup>2</sup>. Medicaid Eligible Professionals (EPs) can participate in non-consecutive years and still get the full incentive amount, through 2021. For more information about how to qualify for the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program or the Medicare EHR Incentive Program, please visit [www.cms.hhs.gov/EHRincentiveprograms](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/EHRincentiveprograms). Your State Medicaid Agency's website may also have more information about the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program<sup>3</sup>.

This is a unique opportunity and HRSA strongly encourages all grantees to consider taking advantage of the Adopt, Implement, Upgrade option for the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program. Grantees should be engaged with their colleagues in Medicaid to provide input and to coordinate efforts and leverage Federal HIT funding. To get engaged in the planning process, and for questions related to the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, including a timeline, eligibility, reporting, payment and how to obtain technical assistance for non-primary care provider staff, please contact your State Medicaid Agency. For state specific resources, please visit <https://www.cms.gov/apps/files/statecontacts.pdf>.

HRSA has provided various technical assistance webinars and conference calls with staff from HRSA, ONC, and, CMS to further answer the safety net community's questions regarding all aspects of these important programs. Please visit all of our websites for more information and future updates:

HRSA: <http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit>  
CMS: <http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms>  
ONC: <http://healthit.hhs.gov/programs/rec>

We want to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to you for your ongoing dedication to delivering the highest quality patient care and commitment to improving our health care system.

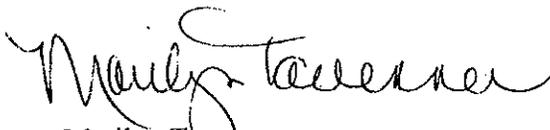
Sincerely,



Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N.  
Administrator  
Health Resources and Services Administration



Farzad Mostashari, M.D., Sc.M.  
National Coordinator  
Office of the National Coordinator for  
Health Information Technology



Marilyn Tavenner  
Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

<sup>2</sup> Please note however, that EPs planning to participate in the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program but treating Medicare beneficiaries may be subject to the Medicare EHR Incentive Program payment adjustment to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule for failing to achieve meaningful use prior to 2015.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cms.gov/apps/files/statecontacts.pdf>