

5-Month Results Reported for Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs

Figures announced by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) show solid results for the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs since registration for the programs opened on Jan. 3, 2011. Authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), these programs provide incentives to eligible professionals and eligible hospitals as they adopt, implement, upgrade or demonstrate meaningful use of certified EHR technology in ways that improve quality, safety, and effectiveness of patient-centered care.

Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs Are Up and Running

On Jan. 3, states began voluntarily offering the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program to eligible professionals (EPs) and eligible hospitals. CMS worked with all states and territories to facilitate their program planning, implementation, and administration, and continues to guide states and territories as they launch their incentive programs, accept and verify provider attestations against eligibility requirements, and issue payments.

By adopting and meaningfully using certified EHR technology, providers can receive financial incentives and achieve improvements in patient care and quality, such as reduced errors, increased availability of records and data, improved clinical decision support, and the convenience and benefits of electronic prescribing.

Eleven states began participating in January: Alaska, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. At the beginning of April, Alabama and Missouri launched their incentive programs. Indiana and Ohio began participating in May, and Pennsylvania and Washington launched in early June. More states will launch their Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs throughout 2011.

Medicaid EHR Incentive Program Results

As of May 31, ten states had issued Medicaid EHR incentive payments totaling more than \$114.5 million to eligible providers who have successfully demonstrated that they have adopted, implemented, or upgraded certified EHR technology.

On Jan. 5, Kentucky and Oklahoma became the first states to issue Medicaid incentive payments. Since then, Alabama, Alaska, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas have also issued incentive payments. Other states that have already launched their Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs announced their intention to disburse their first payments in June or July.

In their first year of participation, providers may receive incentive payments through the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program by first registering through CMS' Web-based registration system, and then demonstrating to their state that they are eligible and have adopted, implemented, or upgraded certified EHR technology.

Medicaid EPs and eligible hospitals do not need to attest to meeting meaningful use criteria in the first year of participation in the program. However, they will have to demonstrate meaningful use in subsequent years. Medicaid EPs can receive up to \$63,750 over the six years that they choose to participate in the program.

Providers residing in states and territories that have not launched their Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs can still register through CMS' Web-based registration system, but will need to wait until their state's program launches to demonstrate their eligibility and attest (legally state) through their state's Medicaid agency Web site that they have met all of the eligibility criteria, including having adopted, implemented, upgraded or meaningfully used certified EHR technology. Information on when specific states' Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs will become available is posted on the CMS Medicaid State Information Web page, <https://www.cms.gov/apps/files/statecontacts.pdf>.

First Medicare EHR Incentive Payments Announced

The Recovery Act also authorized the Medicare EHR Incentive Program, which is administered by CMS. On April 18 CMS opened a secure website through which EPs, eligible hospitals, and critical access hospitals can demonstrate meaningful use of certified EHR technology to CMS by "attesting" to their compliance with program requirements for a continuous 90-day reporting period for their first year of participating in the Medicare EHR Incentive Program. In their second year and subsequent years of participation in the program, providers must demonstrate meaningful use for a full year reporting period. CMS expects that more providers will attest throughout 2011 and that the total amount of Medicare EHR incentive payments will continue to grow.

On May 19 the Medicare EHR Incentive Program issued the first round of payments totaling \$75 million to more than 300 providers who qualified for incentives in the first two weeks of the program.

"Electronic health records can bring America's health care system into the 21st century by helping physicians and hospitals save lives, save money, and save time," said CMS Administrator Donald M. Berwick, MD. Results as we approach mid-year are very encouraging for the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs and indicate providers' strong interest in this important initiative. We encourage early adoption, and we're seeing the participation numbers continue to increase."

CMS looks forward to announcing the launch of additional states' Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs in the coming months and to continued positive results for attestation and payments under the Medicare EHR Incentive Program.

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