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Health Information Technology

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Supporting Meaningful Use

July 22, 2010

ONC Programs to Support Meaningful Use

- **Technical Assistance:** Through the Regional Extension Center Program, ONC is offering technical assistance, guidance, and information on best practices to support and accelerate providers' efforts to become meaningful users of certified EHR technology.

- **Health Information Exchange Support.** Through the State Health Information Exchange Program and Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN) activities, ONC is providing tools, funding and support for building health information exchange capacity.

- **Best Practices.** Through the Beacon Communities Program, ONC is identifying and sharing best practices for using EHRs to achieve improvements in health and health care.

- **Standards and Certification**. ONC is offering guidance on standards to support interoperability of health information and the required capabilities and related standards and implementation specifications that certified EHR technology will need to include to, at a minimum, support the achievement of meaningful use and qualify for payments under the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs.

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Temporary Certification Program Standards and Certification Criteria

Certification Programs: A HITECH Mandate

HITECH Act

Charges the National Coordinator to keep or recognize a program or programs for the voluntary certification of health IT

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Certification and Meaningful Use

- Health care providers must satisfy the respective requirements of the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs with Certified EHR Technology in order to qualify for incentive payments

- Certification provides assurance to health care providers that the EHR technology they adopt will include the capabilities they need to attempt to achieve meaningful use

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Certification Program Regulations

- **March 10, 2010**: HHS published a notice of proposed rulemaking for two programs to test and certify health IT—one temporary and one permanent

- **June 24, 2010:** HHS published a temporary certification program final rule

- **Fall 2010:** HHS expects to publish final rule for permanent certification program

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Temporary and Permanent Certification Programs

- The temporary certification program has been established as a way to start the certification process while the permanent program is set up

- ONC anticipates that the permanent certification program will begin in 2012

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Key Features of Certification Programs

Both the temporary certification program and the proposed permanent certification program:

- Are based on international standards and best practices governing third-party conformance assessment

- Include provisions that promote competition and the existence of multiple testing and certifying bodies

- Separate development of certification criteria from the process of certification

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Temporary Certification Program: Purpose

The temporary certification program establishes:

- The process and requirements for becoming an ONC-Authorized Testing and Certification Body(ATCB), authorized to test and certify EHR technology

- The parameters around testing and certification by ATCBs

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What the Temporary Certification Program Means…

For Providers:

Assurance that the EHR technology they adopt is technically capable of supporting their attempt to achieve meaningful use

For Health IT Developers:

A way to have EHR technology tested and certified so it can be adopted by health care providers to achieve meaningful use

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Key Distinctions of the Certification Programs

The temporary certification program:

- Can be set up and operating in a shorter timeframe
- Testing and certification is done by the same entity – ONC-ATCBs
- ONC authorizes ATCBs

Proposed permanent certification program:

- Testing and certification activities are done by different entities
- Features accreditation of testing and certification bodies
- Includes a surveillance program

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For More Information

- Certification Programs: healthit.hhs.gov/certification

- Temporary Certification Program: healthit.hhs.gov/tempcert

- Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs: cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/

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Standards and Certification Criteria

Standards and Certification Criteria: A HITECH Mandate

HITECH Act

Charges the Secretary of HHS with adopting standards, implementation specifications, and certification criteria for the electronic exchange and use of health information

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ONC Goals for Standards and Certification Criteria

- Focus criteria on achievement of meaningful use
- Promote interoperability
- Support the evolution and timely maintenance of adopted standards
- Promote technical innovation using adopted standards
- Encourage participation and adoption by all vendors, including small businesses
- Keep implementation costs to a minimum

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Standards and Certification Criteria Regulations

- **December 30, 2009:** HHS published an interim final rule with a request for public comments

- **July 13, 2010:** After considering roughly 400 public comments, HHS issued a final rule for standards and certification criteria

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Standards and Certification Criteria: Purpose

Establishes the required capabilities and related standards and implementation specifications that Certified EHR Technology (Complete EHRs or EHR Modules) will need to include, at minimum, to support the achievement of meaningful use Stage 1 under the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs

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Standards and Certification: Process

- Health IT developers design EHR technologies that meet the standards and certification criteria

- Health IT developers submit EHR technologies to an ONC-Authorized Testing and Certification Body (ONC-ATCB), which tests and certifies EHR technologies for use

- Use of certified EHR technology is required to qualify for the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs

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What the Standards and Certification Criteria Mean

For Health Care Providers:

Both the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs include a requirement for eligible health care providers related to certified EHR technology:

- Under the Medicare EHR Incentive Program, eligible health care providers may receive incentive payments if they successfully demonstrate meaningful use of Certified EHR Technology

- Under the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, eligible health care providers who adopt, implement, or upgrade to Certified EHR Technology do not have to demonstrate meaningful use in their first year of the program to receive incentive payments; to receive incentive payments in subsequent years, they will need to demonstrate meaningful use of Certified EHR Technology

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What the Standards and Certification Criteria Mean

For Health IT Developers:

Developers of EHR technology who design their EHR technology in accordance with this final rule and subsequently get their EHR technology tested and certified by an ONC-ATCB are assured that their EHR technology can be adopted by eligible health care providers who seek to achieve meaningful use Stage 1

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For More Information

- Standards and Certification Criteria: http://healthit.hhs.gov/standardsandcertification

- Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs: http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/

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