

Electronic Prescribing (eRx) Incentive Program: Updates for 2013

Background

The Medicare Electronic Prescribing (eRx) Incentive Program, which began January 1, 2009 and is authorized under section 1848(m) of the Social Security Act (the Act), provides incentives for eligible professionals who are successful electronic prescribers. A web page dedicated to providing all the latest news on the eRx Incentive Program is available on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/ERxIncentive>.

As stated in the Act, for years 2012 through 2014, eligible professionals who are not successful electronic prescribers will receive a Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) payment adjustment applied at an increasing rate through 2014. Specifically, if the eligible professional or group practice participating in the eRx Incentive Program through the group practice reporting option (GPRO) is not a successful electronic prescriber for the respective reporting period for the appropriate program year, the PFS amount for covered professional services during the year shall be reduced accordingly.

Purpose

This Fact Sheet contains information about changes to the 2013 eRx Incentive Program incentive payment and the 2014 eRx payment adjustment as authorized by MIPPA.

Changes for the 2013 eRx Incentive Program

The following are key changes for the 2013 eRx Incentive Program:

- The 2013 6-month reporting period (1/1/2013-6/30/2013) is the last reporting period to avoid the 2014 eRx payment adjustment. Those eligible professionals and eRx GPROs who were not successful electronic prescribers in 2012 should report the required number of eRx events via claims during the 6-month reporting period.
- The 2013 12-month reporting period (1/1/2013-12/31/2013) is the last reporting period to earn the eRx Incentive Program incentive payment.
- Eligible professionals and group practices participating in the eRx Group Practice Reporting Option (GPRO) will have the opportunity to request an informal review of their 2013 eRx Incentive Program incentive payment and/or subjectivity to the 2014 eRx payment adjustment. CMS will announce when the eligible professional or eRx GPRO representative can request an informal review later in fall of 2014.
- The 2013 eRx Incentive Program denominator has changed and eligible professionals and eRx GPROs should reference the *2013 eRx Incentive Program Measure Specification* for the new encounter codes.
- Two new hardship exemptions were added for the 2013 and 2014 eRx payment adjustment for those eligible professionals or group practices who either achieve meaningful use, or who demonstrate intent to participate in the Medicare or Medicaid EHR Incentive Program and adopt Certified EHR Technology.

- 2013 eRx GPRO sizes and reporting requirements for incentive eligibility have changed as follows: Large group practices participating in eRx GPRO (100 or more individual eligible professionals) must report **2,500 eRx events**.
- Medium group practices participating in eRx GPRO (25-99 individual eligible professionals) must report **625 eRx events**.
- Small group practices participating in eRx GPRO (2-24 individual eligible professionals) must report **75 eRx events**.

Important Changes for the 2014 eRx Payment Adjustment

2013 eRx Incentive Program reporting and time period requirements were established in the final 2012 PFS rule and the final 2013 PFS rule and are also available on the CMS eRx Incentive Program website. The following are key changes for the 2014 eRx payment adjustment.

Avoiding the 2014 eRx Payment Adjustment

Complete information on how to avoid the 2014 eRx payment adjustment can be found on the CMS eRx Incentive Program website at http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/ERxIncentive/20_Payment_Adjustment_Information.html.

eRx Hardship Exemption Requests to Avoid the 2014 eRx Payment Adjustment

Individual eligible professionals requesting a hardship exemption from the 2014 eRx payment adjustment will be able to submit their request for one of the following hardship exemptions via the CMS Quality Reporting Communication Support Page (Communication Support Page) located at https://www.qualitynet.org/portal/server.pt/community/communications_support_system/234:

- The eligible professional or eRx GPRO practices in an area with limited high-speed Internet access
- The eligible professional or eRx GPRO practices in an area with limited available pharmacies for electronic prescribing
- The eligible professional or eRx GPRO is unable to electronically prescribe due to local, state, or federal law or regulation
- The eligible professional or eRx GPRO has limited prescribing activity, as defined by an eligible professional generating fewer than 100 prescriptions during a 6-month reporting period

CMS will announce when the Communication Support Page becomes available for requesting a hardship exemption for the 2014 eRx payment adjustment.

The following new 2014 eRx payment adjustment exemptions will be determined by CMS through review of the EHR Incentive Program Attestation and Registration system and will be automatically processed by CMS:

- Those eligible professionals and every member within a group practice participating in eRx GPRO who achieve Meaningful Use under the Medicare or Medicaid EHR Incentive Program during the 12-month eRx reporting period (**1/1/2012-12/31/2012**) or the 6-month eRx reporting period (**1/1/2013-6/30/2013**)
- Those eligible professionals and every member within a group practice participating in eRx GPRO who demonstrate intent to participate in the Medicare or Medicaid EHR Incentive Program by registering (providing EHR certification ID) and adopt certified EHR technology by **January 31, 2013**

For complete information on the 2014 eRx hardship exemption categories and on the process for requesting an exemption, visit the CMS eRx Incentive Program website at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/ERxIncentive>.

Additional Information

- For more information on the 2013 eRx Incentive Program, go to <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/ERxIncentive>.
- For more information on avoiding the 2014 eRx payment adjustment, go to http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/ERxIncentive/20_Payment_Adjustment_Information.html.