



MLN Matters



Information for Medicare Fee-for-Service Health Care Professionals

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Doctors' Office Quality Information Technology Demonstrations: Providing Leadership in the Adoption of Electronic Health Records

Provider Types Affected

All Providers

Impact on Providers

This article is informational only.

Background

Recent studies have highlighted the potential for Healthcare Information Technology (HIT) to improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of healthcare. Systems that enhance patient-clinician communication, access to patient information, as well as decision support and reference data hold the promise of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. Additionally, enhanced HIT infrastructure allows the implementation of improved tracking and surveillance applications, which are important in battling emerging public health threats. The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 encourages the use of HIT to manage the clinical care of beneficiaries.

Furthermore, there is great interest in the integration of HIT in healthcare systems by patients, payers, and health policy leaders alike. A recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Fostering Rapid Advances in Health*, called for significant reforms in the practice and organization of medicine and recommended that the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) undertake a number of demonstration projects to stimulate innovation in the adoption of HIT systems in healthcare.

Despite this momentum, physician offices remain largely unengaged in terms of their adoption and use of e-health technologies. Given that the bulk of patient care is provided in ambulatory settings, the lack of HIT integration precludes potentially significant improvements in quality and efficiency in the delivery of healthcare. Through its role as a major payer of healthcare services and sponsor of both the largest national quality improvement program in the Nation, and innovative disease management demonstrations, CMS is actively engaged in fostering IT integration in the Nation's health care system.

The CMS Doctors' Office Quality Information Technology (DOQ-IT) is a major project created to promote Electronic Health Records (EHR) in ambulatory care. This two-year Special Study demonstration is designed to improve quality of care, patient safety, and efficiency for services provided to Medicare

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beneficiaries by promoting the adoption of Electronic Medical Records (EMR)/Electronic Health Records (EHR) and HIT in primary care physician offices. This demonstration involves 4 states: California, Arkansas, Massachusetts and Utah. Lumetra, the California Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), is the lead Medicare QIO and is coordinating the effort through the QIO program in the other three states.

The information gained from DOQ-IT will be used solely for the purposes of disseminating the use of HIT, and studying the role of HIT in improving healthcare delivery in the ambulatory setting. DOQ-IT will not be merged with any enforcement or program integrity efforts.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact James Sorace MD at jsorace@cms.hhs.gov.

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