



## Electronic Submission of Medical Documentation (esMD) Annual Report

September 15, 2011 - September 15, 2012

# **O**VER 85,000 MEDICAL RECORDS WERE SENT THROUGH CMS' **esMD SYSTEM DURING ITS FIRST YEAR!**

This represents 5.5% of all the medical records requested in the past year by the review contractors looking for improper payments in the Medicare program.

On September 15, 2011, CMS implemented the Electronic Submission of Medical Documentation (esMD) system which allows providers to send medical documentation to review contractors electronically. The system uses the “CONNECT” brand of gateway software first developed by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC).

Healthcare providers, Health Information Handlers, and Medicare review contractors believe that using the esMD system results in cost savings and increased efficiencies.

CMS uses several types of review contractors to measure, prevent, identify and correct improper payments. Review contractors find improper payments by selecting a sample of claims, requesting medical documentation from the provider who submitted the claims, and manually reviewing the claims against the medical documentation to verify the providers' compliance with Medicare rules. To comply with the review contractor's requests for documentation, hospitals, physicians and other medical providers send medical documentation via mail or fax to the review contractor. Providers have often complained that this paper-based process is costly and time consuming. Many providers, especially those who use Electronic Health Records, have requested an electronic means to respond to these documentation requests.

CMS' esMD gives providers an alternative to mail and fax. *Using esMD is not mandatory for providers.* Review contractors are prohibited from targeting providers for medical review just because they use esMD.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the esMD system uses ONC's Nationwide Health Information Network standards.

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<sup>1</sup> [CMS Program Integrity Manual, Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.](#)

The number of participants in the CMS esMD Program has grown tremendously throughout this first year. As of September 2012:

- **1,778 Medicare providers** (hospitals, physicians, medical equipment suppliers, etc) were using esMD to respond to medical record request letters they receive from review contractors,
- **16 Health Information Handlers (HIHs)** had been certified by CMS to offer esMD services. Providers contract with HIHs to supply them with esMD services much the same way they contract with claims clearinghouses to supply them with claims submission services,
- **21 review contractors** had been approved by CMS to accept medical records via esMD. Twenty of these are Medicare review contractors and one is a Medicaid review contractor (the Payment Error Rate Measurement, or PERM, Contractor).

To access the CMS esMD system, providers can:

1. build their own gateway that will connect to the CMS esMD gateway, or
2. contract with a CMS-certified Health Information Handler (HIH).

Table A lists the CMS-Certified HIHs.

**Table A:**

<b>CMS Certified esMD HIHs</b>
IVANS
MRO
RISARC
NaviNet
HealthPort
Health IT Plus
ApeniMED, Inc.
Cobius Healthcare Solutions
eSolutions, Inc.
IOD Incorporated
Medial Electronic Attachment (MEA)
The SSI Group
Proficient Health
Rycan Technologies, Inc.
Craneware
MediConnect

Table B lists the CMS review contractors that accept esMD transactions.

**Table B:**

<b>CMS Review Contractors Accepting esMD</b>
Region A Medicare Recovery Auditor (DCS)
Region B Medicare Recovery Auditor (CGI)
Region C Medicare Recovery Auditor (Connolly)
Region D Medicare Recovery Auditor (HDI)
Medicare Administrative J1 (Palmetto GBA)
Medicare Administrative JF (Noridian)
Medicare Administrative J4 (Trailblazer)
Medicare Administrative J5 (WPS)
Medicare Administrative J9 (First Coast)
Medicare Administrative J10 (Cahaba)
Medicare Administrative J11 (Palmetto)
Medicare Administrative J12 (Novitas Solutions)
Medicare Administrative J13 (NGS)
Medicare Administrative J14 (NHIC)
Medicare Administrative J15 (CGS)
DME Medicare Administrative JA (NHIC)
DME Medicare Administrative JB (NGS)
DME Medicare Administrative JC (CGS)
DME Medicare Administrative JD (Noridian)
Comprehensive Error Rate Testing (CERT)
Program Error Rate Measurement (PERM)

CMS expects that more review contractors will begin accepting esMD transactions in FY 2013. In addition, CMS also anticipates a steady increase in the number of prospective HIHs to become CMS-certified and start offering esMD services to providers. Updated lists of CMS review contractors accepting esMD and CMS-certified HIHs can be found at [www.cms.gov/esMD](http://www.cms.gov/esMD)

### **Future use case**

#### **Prior Authorization Requests:**

On September 1, 2012, CMS began a Prior Authorization of Power Mobility Devices (PMD) Demonstration in 7 states. Today, physicians and suppliers who submit Prior Authorization Requests to review contractors must do so via mail or fax. CMS will soon expand the esMD system to allow these Prior Authorization Requests to be submitted via the esMD system.