

# The CMS eHealth Initiative

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has launched its eHealth initiative. eHealth will help providers deliver high-quality health care by simplifying the use of electronic standards and the adoption of health information technology with a goal of transforming the nation's health care system.

## What is eHealth?

eHealth is a CMS initiative that aligns several Medicare and Medicaid programs related to improving the quality and efficiency of our health care system:

- Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs
- Quality Measurement
  - Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS)
  - Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (Hospital IQR) Program
- eRx Incentive Program
- Administrative Simplification
  - ICD-10
  - Health Plan Identifier (HPID)
  - Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)
  - Electronic Remittance Advice (RA)

## Why eHealth?

eHealth will help providers simplify their administrative and billing responsibilities by unifying electronic standards and health information technology programs. Making the move to eHealth represents a challenge for everyone—providers, technology vendors, payers, and CMS. CMS is committed to helping providers and the industry successfully use eHealth to improve health care, reduce health care costs, improve patient safety, and enhance quality.

None of these initiatives can individually achieve the desired goals, but each is a component in creating a CMS eHealth approach that relies on a robust health IT infrastructure to transform the nation's health care system.

## The Future of eHealth

The future of eHealth is dependent on interoperability— the ability to share health care data freely and easily among patients, physicians, health care providers, and health plans. Health data sharing is not consistent between different sites of care. However, through secure health information exchange and electronic transfer using EHRs and data standards, providers can now bring data together to make informed decisions about patients’ care across multiple sites of care.

Various CMS initiatives are working to facilitate the electronic exchange of clinical data between providers and the electronic measurement of quality indicators. The adoption of ICD-10 and administrative simplification operating standards improve electronic data interchange by defining how and when electronic transactions occur, and what information is included.

There are challenges when implementing these requirements concurrently, but CMS is committed to helping providers and the industry successfully use eHealth to transform health care.

## CMS Support

CMS will take an active role in engaging physicians, provider associations, payers, and technology developers to identify ways to meet these challenges. CMS will closely collaborate with stakeholders to successfully navigate implementation and integration of EHRs, operating standards, and quality measurement; and will review regulations to maximize alignment opportunities across initiatives.

CMS has a dedicated eHealth website ([www.cms.gov/eHealth](http://www.cms.gov/eHealth)), blog, and listserv for eHealth programs. These resources serve as a central source of information on implementation, guidance, milestones, and critical steps so that providers and other stakeholders can more easily coordinate efforts on ICD-10, EHRs and meaningful use, operating standards, electronic quality measurement, and payment models. CMS looks forward to working with providers and the health care industry on this initiative to support and promote high quality, efficient care delivery in our health care system.