



EHR Incentive Programs

A program of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

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CMS Provides First Medicare Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Payments Totaling \$75 Million; Providers Offered Flexibility in Adopting E-Prescribing

CMS announced last Thursday that the first payments of the Medicare EHR Incentive Program were distributed on May 19. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Medicare EHR Incentive Program provides payments to eligible professionals (EPs) and hospitals that demonstrate meaningful use of certified EHR technology.

CMS Administrator Donald Berwick, MD, explained in a statement that the payments are a crucial part of the nation's future, "We can bring America's health care system into the 21st century by adopting electronic health records and using electronic prescribing systems. Today's announcements are steps on the right path – toward the health IT system America needs, which will save lives, save money."

CMS noted that in addition to the \$75 million given to providers participating in the Medicare program, fifteen states have initiated their Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs since January 2011, and, to date, over \$83 million in incentive payments has been made to qualified Medicaid providers.

The National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, Farzad Mostashari, MD, ScM, said in a statement, "Through the EHR Incentive Programs, we are helping eligible providers invest in their technology infrastructure. But this isn't just about technology. The goal is better and safer health care, and that means it's about patients – about their health care and protection of their information."

Last Thursday, CMS also announced proposals for new flexibilities to help providers phase in the use of electronic prescribing. This program provides financial incentives, including payment adjustments beginning January 1, 2012, for EPs to encourage electronic prescribing (eRx).

The full [press release](#) can be found on the CMS website.

Detailed fact sheets on both the e-prescribing proposed rule and the EHR incentive payments can be found in the [fact sheet section](#) of the CMS website.

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