

**For Immediate Release:**

**Contact:**

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CMS Office of Public Affairs  
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**CMS ANNOUNCES FINANCIAL RESOURCES, FLEXIBILITY TO HELP PROVIDERS USE HEALTH IT SYSTEMS**

**FIRST MEDICARE ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS (EHR) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TOTAL \$75 MILLION; PROVIDERS OFFERED FLEXIBILITY IN ADOPTING E-PRESCRIBING**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced two steps that will help modernize America's health care delivery system by encouraging doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers to adopt and meaningfully use health information technology. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, providers are receiving incentive payments through both the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs for the meaningful use of certified EHR technology. The proposed rule for the Electronic Prescribing Incentive Program released today would give more flexibility to providers who are adopting electronic prescribing systems.

"We can bring America's health care system into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by adopting electronic health records and using electronic prescribing systems," said CMS Administrator Donald M. Berwick, MD. "Today's announcements are steps on the right path – toward the health IT system America needs, which will save lives, save money, and save time."

These two programs give providers new options and incentives to use health IT to improve care for their patients, which can improve patient health and lower costs.

On May 19, 2011, the Medicare EHR Incentive Program issued the first round of payments totaling \$75 million to providers who signed up in the first two weeks of the program.

Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs are being implemented on a State by State basis. Since January 2011, fifteen States have initiated their Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs and to date, over \$83 million in incentive payments has been made to qualified Medicaid providers.

"Through the EHR incentive programs, we are helping eligible providers invest in their technology infrastructure," said Farzad Mostashari, MD, ScM., National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. "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."

The Electronic Prescribing Incentive Program today announced proposals for new flexibilities to help providers phase in the use of electronic prescription technology. This program provides financial incentives, including payment adjustments beginning January 1, 2012, for eligible providers to encourage electronic prescribing. The proposals announced today would provide exemptions from the payment adjustment for providers who plan to participate in the program but who face certain barriers to using electronic prescribing systems or meeting program requirements that may be beyond their control.

“Today’s rule demonstrates that CMS is willing to work cooperatively with the medical professional community to encourage participation in electronic prescribing,” said Patrick Conway, MD, MSc, CMS Chief Medical Officer and Director of the CMS Office of Clinical Standards and Quality. “These proposed changes will continue to encourage adoption of electronic prescribing while acknowledging circumstances that may keep health professionals from realizing the full potential of these systems right away.”

These efforts are part of a broader effort by the Obama Administration to improve care and lower costs, including through new initiatives established by the Health Information Technology Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH), part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Other HITECH initiatives have helped train workers to support the adoption and meaningful use of EHRs, and provide advice and technical assistance to providers as they switch to EHRs. For more information about progress under the HITECH act to date, visit [http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_0\\_4381\\_1238\\_15609\\_43/http%3B/wci-pubcontent/publish/onc/public\\_communities/p\\_t/resources\\_and\\_public\\_affairs/fact\\_sheets/fact\\_sheets\\_portlet/files/aspa\\_0386\\_20110525\\_onc\\_fs\\_meaningful\\_use\\_v01\\_3.pdf](http://healthit.hhs.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_4381_1238_15609_43/http%3B/wci-pubcontent/publish/onc/public_communities/p_t/resources_and_public_affairs/fact_sheets/fact_sheets_portlet/files/aspa_0386_20110525_onc_fs_meaningful_use_v01_3.pdf)

For more information:

For detailed fact sheets on both the e-prescribing proposed rule and the EHR incentive payments, please visit: [http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/fact\\_sheets.asp](http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/fact_sheets.asp).

Medicare EHR Incentive Program payments will continue to be made on the monthly basis. For a list of providers who have received Medicare EHR Incentive Program payments, please visit:

[http://www.cms.gov/apps/files/EHR\\_providers.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/apps/files/EHR_providers.pdf)

This information will be updated on a regular basis.

CMS’ proposed rule on electronic prescribing is available for public review and comment today at [http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUupload/OFRData/2011-13463\\_PI.pdf](http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUupload/OFRData/2011-13463_PI.pdf)

The rule will be published in the Federal Register on June 1, 2011. The comment period will close on July 25, 2011. For more information about the Electronic Prescribing Incentive Program, please visit: <http://www.cms.gov/ErxIncentive>.

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