

An Overview of the **Medicaid EHR Incentive Program**

Overview

The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act established programs under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide incentive payments for the meaningful use of certified electronic health record (EHR) technology by eligible providers. Georgia's Medicaid EHR Incentive Program is a multi-year, multi-stage program administered by the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH). CMS administers the Medicare incentive program.

Program Goals

Georgia's Medicaid EHR Incentive Program serves two main goals:

- Instill and support the use of EHRs in meaningful ways to help Georgia and the nation improve the quality, safety and efficiency of patient care
- Reward Georgia's providers during the transformation of our nation's health care system

Program Participation

The program is limited to eligible Medicaid professionals for six years of participation, and eligible Medicaid hospitals for three years. Participants must use certified EHR technology and meet all eligibility requirements. Participation is voluntary and 100 percent federally funded.

Eligible Medicaid Professionals

Defined as:

- Physicians (M.D. and D.O.)
- Nurse Practitioners,
- Certified Nurse-Midwives
- Dentists

Professionals cannot be hospital-based, and they must meet 30 percent minimum Medicaid patient volume thresholds. For pediatricians, the minimum threshold is 20 percent with reduced incentive payments.)



Important Program Dates

Program Period	2011-2021
Program Registration	(Federal/CMS) Now Open
Program Registration	(GA/DCH) September 2011
Incentive Payments	Disbursements begin late September 2011
Last Date to Begin	Participation 2016



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Eligible Medicaid Hospitals

Defined as:

- Acute Care Hospitals (including Critical Access Hospitals) must meet a 10 percent minimum Medicaid patient volume
- Children's Hospitals are not required to meet patient volume thresholds and cannot be pediatric wings of larger hospitals

Certified EHR Technology

Certification of the EHR technology by an Office of the National Coordinator-Authorized Testing and Certification Body (ONC-ATCB) is required. Certification assures purchasers and users that an EHR system or product module offers the necessary technological capability, functionality and security to satisfy meaningful use objectives.

Adopt, Implement, Upgrade & Meaningful Use

Participants must:

- Adopt (acquire and install),
- Implement (commence usage of),
- Upgrade (expand functionality with new version, etc.) **or**
- Demonstrate meaningful use of the technology during year one of their program participation.

In all subsequent years, providers must demonstrate meaningful use (i.e., how the technology moves beyond being a digital medical chart into being a valuable tool to transform health care service delivery and improve health outcomes).

Requirements

Participants must:

- Meet the eligibility requirements
- Attain applicable Medicaid patient volume thresholds
- Adopt, implement, upgrade or meaningfully use certified EHR technology
- Register with CMS and the State of Georgia
- Provide the necessary Attestation of certified EHR usage

Incentives for Eligible Medicaid Professionals

For those meeting all program requirements, eligible professionals may receive up to \$63,750 total during their six years of program participation. The Year One payment is \$21,250; each subsequent year is \$8,500. The total incentive for pediatricians who meet the 20 percent patient volume threshold but fall short of the 30 percent patient volume threshold is \$14,167 in the first year and \$5,667 in each subsequent year. This adds up to a maximum Medicaid EHR incentive payment of \$42,500 that may be paid over a six-year period.

Incentives for Eligible Medicaid Hospitals

Hospital incentive payments are based on a number of factors, beginning with a base payment. The aggregate payment will be divided into three payments: 40 percent in Payment Year One, 40 percent in Payment Year Two and 20 percent in Payment Year Three. (Note: Certain hospitals may qualify for both the Medicaid and Medicare incentive programs.)

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Registration

In payment Year 1 adoption/implementation/upgrade or demonstration of meaningful use is NOT required at the time of registration and attestation at the federal level. However, it is required for your registration and attestation at the state level. Federal registration is available now through the CMS website: www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/. State of Georgia registration is now available at www.dch.georgia.gov/ehr.

Incentive Payments

An attestation of certified EHR usage including the applicable patient volume and incentive payment calculators must be submitted during the state level registration process and approved by DCH for an incentive payment. Once approved, allow at least 30 – 45 days for payment. There is only one incentive payment per year, and providers must reapply every year. Incentive payments are expected to commence in late September 2011.

Technical Assistance – GA-HITREC

The National Center for Primary Care (NCPC), located at the Morehouse School of Medicine, serves as the Georgia Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (GA-HITREC).

- GA-HITREC's mission is to use a community-oriented approach to assist health care professionals with selection, implementation and meaningful use of certified EHR systems to improve clinical outcomes and the quality of patient care provided.
- Group purchasing plans and technical assistance are available to all eligible professionals (i.e., priority primary care providers including physicians {M.D., D.O.}, nurse practitioners, obstetrics, internal medicine and pediatrics) participating in either the Medicare or Medicaid incentive programs.

For More Information

Visit these websites to learn more, or e-mail us directly at medicaidincentives@dch.ga.gov.

- CMS – Medicare & Medicaid Incentive Program: www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/
- DCH – Georgia's Medicaid EHR Incentives Program: www.dch.georgia.gov/ehr
- GA-HITREC – For Certified EHR Technology Technical Assistance: www.primarycareforall.org or 404-752-1015 or 877-658-1990
- EHR Certification and List of Certified EHRs – Office of the National Coordinator: healthit.hhs.gov/certification