

Receive \$40,000 to \$60,000 for Effectively Using an EMR

President Obama Signs 2009 Stimulus Bill providing \$19 Billion for Healthcare Information Technology

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The American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill which was signed into law on February 17th by President Obama is a great win for the healthcare industry. This new stimulus package includes funding for Health Information Technology under the HITECH act (see page H1337 for the HITECH portion) and other infrastructure projects for FQHC's and CHC's.

STIMULUS DETAILS

\$17.2 Billion has been allocated for additional Medicare/Medicaid Reimbursements. Another \$2 billion in "jump start" funds will be rapidly disseminated as grants and loans to increase IT adoption at the discretion of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT).

In addition to the \$19.2 Billion above, the Department of Health and Human Services has been allocated another \$2 Billion to help community clinics with upfront funding.

Though much of the detail in this measure is undefined and left to the discretion of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, there are some key points that can be discerned from the bill.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PAYMENT

An eligible professional is defined as a physician by section 1861 of the Social Security code. This includes medical doctors, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists and chiropractors. Payments will be made to outpatient physicians who have demonstrated that they are a "meaningful" EHR user. Though "meaningful" has yet to be defined, it is probably safe to assume that Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT, www.cchit.org) certification will somehow relate to an EHR's status as "meaningful". In addition to CCHIT certification, there are three basic requirements that have been identified:

- 1) The EHR solution must include electronic prescribing.
- 2) The EHR solution must allow for electronic exchange of health information.
- 3) The physician must submit information measures selected by the Secretary of Health and Human Services

AMOUNT OF PAYMENT

The incentive payments will be equal to 75% of the amount paid to eligible professionals by Medicare. (The limitations are 25% higher for eligible providers in areas designated as health professional shortage areas.)

Payments are limited to the following schedule:

- a) Year 1: \$18,000 if the first payment year is 2011 or 2012, \$15,000 if the first payment year is 2013, \$12,000 if the first payment year is 2014
- b) Year 2: \$12,000
- c) Year 3: \$8000
- d) Year 4: \$4000
- e) Year 5: \$2000

The method of payment has not been determined and is up to the discretion of the Secretary. It may be made as a lump sum or by incremental payments. Claims for a specific reporting year must be submitted within two months of the end of the year in order to be eligible for EHR bonus payment.



PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY

The method for satisfying the requirements of proving the effective use of a “meaningful” EHR and electronic health exchange is still to be determined by the Secretary of HHS.

PENALTY FOR NOT USING AN EHR

Beginning in 2015 there will be a reduction in Medicare payments for professional services if that professional is not using an “meaningful” EHR. The amount of Medicare payments (with some exceptions) will be reduced by 1% in 2015, 2% in 2016 and 3% for 2017 and beyond.

About Curas

Curas is a St. Louis area based health information technology consulting company and a Value Added Reseller (VAR) of the eClinicalWorks suite of products for the electronic medical office. From planning through implementation, training and support, Curas has a nationwide reputation for providing the services physicians need to ensure that technology enables their business, not hinders it. Curas’ staff of eClinicalWorks certified specialists install the software, train end users, and assist practices with optimizing their office workflow to maximize the benefit they receive from deploying eClinicalWorks’ products. Curas maintains its own call center providing Level 1 and Level 2 support to its clients. In addition to servicing and supporting clients in Missouri, Illinois and Kansas, Curas is frequently called upon by eClinicalWorks and other eClinicalWorks VARs to install and train users at various sites around the United States. Today, Curas supports over 450 physicians in over 30 states with practices ranging in size from solo practices to multi-specialty 50 provider practices. For more information about Curas, visit: www.curas.net.

About eClinicalWorks®

eClinicalWorks is a privately held leader in the ambulatory clinical systems market. The company’s unified electronic medical record (EMR) and practice management (PM) solutions are proven for every market segment: large practice groups, including Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative (MAeHC), Electronic Health Records of Rhode Island (EHRRI) and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, as well as medium, small and solo practices regardless of specialty. The company enjoys high profitability with a five-year compounded growth rate of more than 100 percent year-to-year. With an established customer base of 3,200 customers across all 50 states, eClinicalWorks has been awarded multiple top industry honors including being named to the Inc. 500 in 2007, Best in KLAS in 2006, 2005 and 2004, and a top solution by TEPR for four consecutive years. Based in Westborough, Mass., eClinicalWorks has additional offices in New York City and Alpharetta, Ga.

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