

Achieving Meaningful Use in Private Practice

A close examination of Stage 2 requirements



Abstract

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Federal Government laid the groundwork for the nationwide implementation of electronic health records (EHR) systems as a measure to improve patient care, reduce healthcare costs, and increase the level of overall public health. The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) program requires providers to demonstrate meaningful use (MU) of an electronic health record system to be eligible for monetary incentives. The implementation of EHR and compliance with meaningful use regulations, should be a top priority for all eligible healthcare professionals (EPs).

To demonstrate meaningful use, providers must attest through certified electronic health record software, such as AdvancedMD, which allows providers to comply with federal meaningful use regulations and thus qualify for monetary incentives.

Understanding the Benefits of EHR

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides reimbursement incentives for eligible professionals through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services over several years if they demonstrate meaningful use of an EHR.¹ The implementation of EHR systems is not intended solely to advance technology, but rather to improve patient care and population health while reducing the overall cost of healthcare. The implementation of an EHR system is a move toward a more efficient and complete healthcare system. Access to complete health histories allows both providers and patients to make better-informed decisions about treatment and health management.

Complete and accurate information. Healthcare professionals may access complete and accurate patient health history immediately through EHR systems. Quick, reliable access to patient information and history allows providers to assess potential side effects and interactions early in treatment process before complications occur.

Patient empowerment. Patients who have access to doctors' orders, test results, and prescribed treatments are more likely to follow medical advice. A patient access portal to view electronic records is a valuable step to empowering patients and improving population health.²

Better access to information. EHR retrieval is almost instantaneous, which is especially important in emergency situations. Eliminating the need for manual file retrieval and test result phone calls, EHRs increase the quality of care, as health information is readily available.

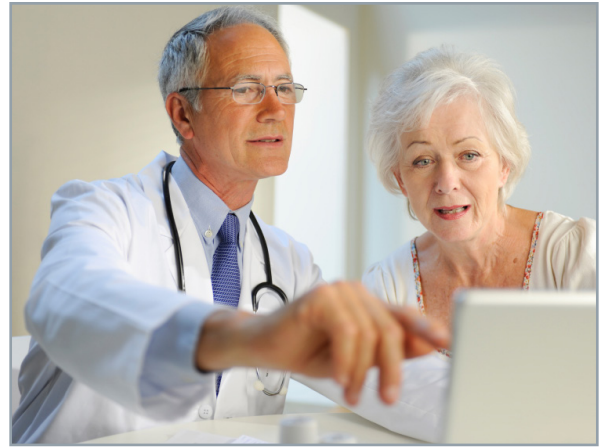
AdvancedMD EHR features streamline meaningful use processes:

- The ONC-ATCB certified EHR status is in compliance with government MU guidelines.
- Tools are specifically designed to meet the core objectives of MU.
- Software workflow is user-friendly for both healthcare providers and office staff.
- The attestation process is more easily accomplished to achieve CMS monetary incentives through MU reporting dashboards.
- Freedom to practice remotely is facilitated through iPad and other devices that utilize cloud software and cloud storage.
- The all-in-one software suite approach maximizes efficiency and increases revenue.

1. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Federal Register, Vol. 75. No. 144. July 28, 2012
2. Electronic Records and Meaningful Use. www.healthhit.hhs.gov

Are eligible providers participating?

Physicians began receiving monetary incentives through the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs in May 2011. EHR early adopters are complying with new meaningful use regulations, but the majority of eligible providers have not taken advantage of the federal incentive program. Eligible providers may apply for federal incentive monies through their certified medical software or with their state Medicaid program. AdvancedMD will streamline the incentive application process and meaningful use reporting for your practice, allowing you to receive reimbursement as early as possible.



“For the first time, physicians and other health professionals received more cash in Medicare MU bonuses than hospitals got in a single month. Medicare Payment Advisory Commission data shows that the vast majority of physicians have yet to collect a dime of government incentives for their use of electronic health records.”³

Meeting Deadlines for Meaningful Use Incentives

EPs must meet specific deadlines for implementation and attestation to qualify for Medicare and Medicaid incentives. With monetary incentive payouts up to \$44,000 over five years for Medicare EHR Incentive Program⁴ and up to \$63,750 through Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, meeting established deadlines is critical. Additionally, these incentives decrease each year compounding the importance of applying early. EPs must adopt certified EHR technology, such as ADP AdvancedMD, and use it to achieve specific objectives. The underlying purpose for the three stages requires: “The collection of specific

quality measures: in particular, 15 inpatient and 6 outpatient quality measures that will have to be collected and reported to meet these criteria. The Stage 2 criteria for quality measures will raise the bar further. Broadly, the goal is that Stage 2 will encourage providers to begin improving process, whereas Stage 3 will result in improved outcomes.”⁵

Stage 1: 2011-2012	Stage 2: 2014	Stage 3: 2015
Electronically capturing health information in a standardized format	More rigorous health information exchange	Improving quality, safety, and efficiency, leading to improved health outcomes
Using that information to track key clinical conditions	Increased requirements for eRx and incorporating lab results	Decision support for national high-priority conditions
Communicating that information for care coordination processes	Electronic transmission of patient care summaries across multiple settings	Patient access to self-management tools
Initiating the reporting of clinical quality measures and public health information	More patient-controlled data	
Using information to engage patients and their families in their care		

<http://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/how-attain-meaningful-use>

3. Dolan, Pamela Lewis. “More Physicians Awarded Meaningful Use Money”, *American Medical News* April 19, 2012.
4. How to Attain Meaningful Use, www.healthit.gov
5. Bates, David W. and Classen, David C. Finding Meaning in Meaningful Use, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 365, 855-858, September 1, 2011.

Understanding Stage 2 Requirements

Providers who have already met Stage 1 requirements can begin reporting compliance with Stage 2 meaningful use objectives. Stage 2 focuses on many Stage 1 requirements, however, many optional objectives will become mandatory, including a special focus on electronic health record exchange with patients and other providers.

Providers applying for Stage 2 incentives must meet 17 Core Objectives and a minimum of 3 Menu Objectives

Stage 2 Meaningful Use Core Objectives ⁶		Stage 2 Menu Objectives ⁶
Use computerized provider order entry (CPOE) for medication, laboratory and radiology orders	Incorporate clinical lab-test results into certified EHR technology.	Submit electronic syndromic surveillance data to public health agencies.
Generate and transmit permissible prescriptions electronically.	Generate lists of patients by specific condition for quality improvement, reduction of disparities, research, or outreach.	Record electronic notes in patient records.
Record demographic information.	Use clinically relevant information to identify patients who should receive reminders for preventive/follow-up care.	Imaging results accessible through CEHRT.
Record and chart changes in vital signs.	Use certified EHR technology to identify patient-specific education resources.	Record patient family health history.
Record smoking status for patients 13 years old or older.	Perform medication reconciliation.	Identify and report cancer cases to a State cancer registry.
Use clinical decision support to improve performance on high-priority health conditions.	Provide summary of care record for each transition of care or referral.	Identify and report specific cases to a specialized registry (other than a cancer registry).
Provide patients the ability to view online, download and transmit their health information.	Submit electronic data to immunization registries.	
Provide clinical summaries for patients for each office visit.	Use secure electronic messaging to communicate with patients on relevant health information.	
Protect electronic health information created or maintained by the certified EHR technology.		

6. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2012, August). Stage 2 Overview Tipsheet. www.cms.gov

7. Scheps, Linda. The Low-Down on Future Meaningful Use Penalties, EMR & HIPPA Forum www.emrandhippa.com, November 28, 2011.

Avoiding Potential Penalties

Providers who do not prove meaningful use of an EHR system may stand to lose substantial compensation through Medicare payment reductions. Medicare providers who fail to prove meaningful use, even if they have implemented an EHR system, will be penalized beginning January 2015. The percentage decreases by one percent in 2015 and continues through 2017 with an additional one percent decrease in reimbursement amounts per year. (Possible penalties may continue through 2019, although this has not been officially stipulated.) Although there are currently no penalties associated with Medicaid, if Medicaid providers don't comply

with EHR requirements by the end of 2014, the revenue they receive under Medicare will also be subject to the existing adjusted fee schedule.⁷ Payment adjustments have already been imposed for Medicare providers who do not utilize ePrescribing—MU penalties will compound revenue loss.

Early adopters of EHR systems are more likely to meet meaningful use deadlines and receive federal incentives. Many industry professionals are concerned that late adopters will be unable to obtain, implement, and manage their electronic record system by the established deadlines. Providers risk being added to waiting

lists or paying elevated prices as deadlines approach and software companies try to meet increasing demand. The best way to avoid fee adjustments and penalties is to implement EHR software as early as possible and ensure adequate time and resources for meeting meaningful use requirements. ADP AdvancedMD makes it easy to start the EHR process now. Practitioners who invest in the system early will avoid the last-minute rush and headache before federal deadlines.

AdvancedMD as a Powerful Tool in Meaningful Use

The Department of Health and Human Services outlines the criteria required to prove meaningful use of electronic health records. The criteria are varied and include many stipulations, which can be cumbersome to navigate. ADP AdvancedMD EHR is a certified, cloud suite that meets Meaningful Use criteria while streamlining the organizational processes of your practice. Consider some features that comply with MU stipulations:

- Patient Portal permits the patient to log in remotely to see recommendations and treatment plans, encouraging the patient to be more involved in their health.
- Interoperability exchanges medical information and records securely between providers and care facilities.
- ePrescribing allows quick transmission of prescriptions to pharmacies and management of medications to reduce risk.
- Patient encounter provides the electronic charting feature of the EHR including an eNote library, integration with Microsoft Word, and incorporation of charts.
- Clinical quality measures enable tracking and reporting with ease.
- HealthWatcher™ serves as a reminder for follow-up visits and encourages preventive care.
- Remote access allows a provider to access a patient's records anywhere with Internet access.
- Electronic record submission makes the federal incentive application process easy.
- Quality reporting feature captures quality data during routine visit documentation.

Achieving Results

Healthcare providers are already experiencing the benefits of electronic health records. AdvancedMD allows practices to meet and attest to MU criteria while providing tools to manage your day-to-day operations. The details of patient care and documentation are streamlined into one secure electronic health record, which maximizes efficient use of time and money. Claims reimbursement results in a 95% first-pass claims approval rate and boosting your long-term revenue. Additionally, as providers attest to MU compliance, they receive monetary bonuses up to \$44,000 from the Medicare Incentive Program and \$63,750 through Medicaid Incentive program.

When your healthcare office implements AdvancedMD EHR and practice management tools, all aspects of billing, claims, coding, and EHR are unified into one powerful package.



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