

Meaningful Use and Electronic Health Records Incentive Programs

Sacramento County Public Health

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What is the EHR Incentive Program?

In 2011, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs to accelerate the adoptions of health information technology (HIT) and utilization of qualified EHRs. CMS grants incentive payments to eligible professionals or eligible hospitals who demonstrate that they have engaged in efforts to adopt, implement, or upgrade certified EHR technology.

What is Meaningful Use (MU)?

Meaningful Use is the use of certified electronic health record technology in a meaningful manner that will improve the quality of care. MU sets specific objectives for eligible professionals and eligible hospitals that must be achieved to qualify for CMS Incentive Programs. There are 3 stages of Meaningful Use. Each stage builds upon the previous one. Stage 1 is data capture and sharing, which emphasizes proper data capture and data sharing using an EHR technology. Stage 2 is advanced clinical processes, which requires providers to extend EHR capabilities to a larger portion of their patient population. Stage 3 is improved outcomes, which will aim to simplify the program, improve patient outcomes, and encourage interoperability between electronic health records.

What are the benefits of Meaningful Use?

Meaningful Use will benefit the health care system in many ways. Compliance will result in better clinical outcomes, improved population health outcomes, increased transparency and efficiency, empowered individuals, and more robust research data on health systems. The concept of meaningful use is based on the following health outcomes policy priorities:

- Improving quality, safety, efficiency, and reducing health disparities
- Engage patients and families in their health
- Improve care coordination
- Improve population and public health
- Ensure adequate privacy and security of personal health information

Where can I get more information about EHR Incentives and Meaningful Use?

For more information on Meaningful Use and EHR Incentive Programs, visit <https://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/meaningful-use-definition-objectives>

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