

ARRA Information for Your Practice | Stimulus Basics

What You Should Know About the ARRA

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to stimulate the U.S. economy.

As part of the broader bill, the HITECH Act appropriates \$19.2 billion to encourage healthcare organizations to adopt and utilize Electronic Health Records (EHR), establish regional health information exchange networks, and ensure that deployed systems protect patient privacy.

FACT #1:

The bulk of HITECH Act funding - \$17.2 billion - is dedicated to incentives that will reward physicians and hospitals for effectively utilizing a robust, connected EHR system. The additional \$2 billion has been earmarked as EHR adoption funds for providers in medically underserved areas, community and rural health centers and states with special projects underway. Details to follow by May 2009 from the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC).

Sage is one of only a handful of vendors who feature a fully integrated practice management and CCHIT Certified EHR solution. The Sage Intergy Suite, featuring Sage Intergy EHR, gives you the tools your practice needs to maximize revenue while optimizing patient care.

FACT #2:

Purchasing an electronic health record (EHR) does not, on its own, qualify you for the Medicaid program incentives. That requires physicians to make "meaningful use" of the EHR. While the Office of the National Coordinator still must precisely define the term "meaningful use," it's likely that at least three criteria will be included:

1. Use of a certified EHR product with e-Prescribing capability that meets current Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) standards.

2. Connectivity to other providers that helps provide full visibility into a patient's health history.
3. The capability to report on their use of technology to HHS.

The Sage Intergy Suite features an integrated practice management system along with a customizable EHR solution that includes e-Prescribing, comprehensive electronic encounter documentation and more. The Sage Intergy Suite enables your practice to capture, view and report on data that may be required for participation in government and other incentive programs.

FACT #3:

Medicare Incentives - Physicians who accept Medicare can receive up to \$44,000 over five years beginning in 2011.

The bill provides a higher payment ceiling for "early adopters," defined as physicians who first begin "meaningful use" of HIT systems in 2011 -- the first year payment incentives will be available -- or 2012. These physicians could receive as much as \$18,000 the first year they adopt the technology. Incentive payments will end in 2015 and CMS will reduce Medicare payments for eligible professionals that are not meaningful EHR users.

The time to act is NOW! Remember, just purchasing the software is not enough... you must be meaningfully using it in order to take advantage of these programs.

Start searching for the right EHR solution immediately and target the purchase and implementation for 2009-2010 so your practice can be ready when the incentives kick-in in 2011. Get a jump on the technology and you'll be positioned to maximize a return on your investment - up to \$44,000 per provider!

Total Potential Incentives for EHR Purchase & "Use"

Incentive Eligibility Amounts by Year

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
2011	\$18K	\$12K	\$8K	\$4K	\$2K	\$44K
2012	\$0	\$18K	\$12K	\$8K	\$4K	\$42K
2013	\$0	\$0	\$15K	\$12K	\$8K	\$35K
2014	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12K	\$8K	\$20K
2015 or after	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Year EHR "Use" is First Demonstrated

NOW is the time!
Take advantage of
ARRA incentives
and maximize your
ROI with
MD Solutions, Inc.

FACT #4:

Medicaid Incentives: Physicians who see more than 30% of patients paying with Medicaid (20% for pediatricians) are eligible for payments of up to \$64,000 over five years. The incentives will be calculated through a formula that factors in the exact Medicaid mix seen by the provider as well as amounts ranging from \$25,000 in the first year to \$10,000 in subsequent years. Because pediatricians are required to meet a lower threshold, they are only eligible for 66% of the incentive payments described above.

Comprehensive reporting may be required in order to take advantage of these Medicaid (and Medicare) incentives. Sage has solutions that enable users to create and report on data regardless of their level of programming experience. A variety of standard and customizable report templates make getting the data you need a snap!

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Sage understands that your focus is on patient care. ARRA may appear to be all about financial incentives; but let's not forget that part of the rationale behind this important act is improving patient care and the management of chronic disease across the US. That's a goal we can all work towards achieving.

So, whether you've: never considered an EHR; have been shopping for an EHR; already have but don't fully utilize an EHR - there has never been a better time to make the move and take full advantage of an Electronic Health Record solution. Your practice has every incentive to take this critical step - sooner rather than later.

To learn more, contact
MD Solutions, Inc. today
at 706-323-6201.

Additional Stimulus Package info
can also be found at: www.himss.org