

September 4, 2009

Florida Medicaid Provider Message: Electronic Health Record Incentive Program

Many providers may be planning to purchase or upgrade Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems. In order to qualify for incentives under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, EHR systems will need to meet certification requirements that have yet to be determined. As you make any purchases or changes to your system, please get assurance from your vendor that the system will meet future requirements. During a presentation to the Health Information Exchange Coordinating Committee (HIECC), former Representative Gayle Harrell, who serves on Federal Health Information Technology Policy Committee, cautioned the HIECC that her committee recommended that EHRs that do not meet new standards will not be grandfathered in to qualify for incentives or to preclude Medicare penalties. The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) will make the final decision.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) is promoting the meaningful use of EHRs by providing incentives to eligible Medicaid and Medicare providers. Eligible Medicaid providers may receive up to 85% of allowable costs for EHR technology and support services (up to \$63,750). Funding is available over a six year period from 2011 through 2021.

In order to qualify for a Medicaid EHR Incentive you must be an eligible professional, i.e. physician, dentist, certified nurse mid-wife, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant where the assistant is practicing in a rural health clinic that is led by a physician or is practicing in a Federally Qualified Health Center that is so led. Additionally, an eligible professional will need to demonstrate that at least 30 percent of their patient volume is attributable to Medicaid. If you are a pediatrician who is not hospital-based, 20 percent of the patient volume must be Medicaid in order to qualify. If you practice predominantly in a Federally Qualified Health Center or rural health clinic, at least 30 percent of your patient volume should be attributable to needy individuals. The methodology for this estimate will be established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The Agency for Health Care Administration will administer the Medicaid EHR Incentive program and will provide further guidance on qualifying and applying for Medicaid Electronic Health Record Incentives. Additional information on the ARRA is available at www.fhin.net.