

Stimulus Act Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Stimulus Act's official name?

A: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (or ARRA).

Q: How much is set aside for healthcare IT such as EHR adoption?

A: Approximately \$20 billion has been allocated to incentivize hospitals and eligible professionals to adopt Healthcare IT technology such as EHR and e-Rx.

Q: How much of the \$20 billion will be available as incentives to adopt EHR?

A: \$17.2 billion will be available as incentives through the Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement systems to assist eligible professionals adopt EHRs.

Q: Who are "eligible professionals" with regard to the Stimulus Act?

A: Medical doctors, dentists, podiatrists, chiropractors, and optometrists.

Q: What is required, system-wise, in order to obtain the incentives?

A: Eligible professionals will have to "meaningfully use" a "certified" EHR.

Q: What makes a "certified product" certified?

A: ARRA has not yet officially specified the certifying organization. It does specify that the certifying organization must be announced no later than December 31, 2009.

Q: Is Praxis EMR CCHIT certified?

A: Yes, it has been since 2006 - CCHIT Certified®.

Q: What about "Meaningful Usage?"

A: While "meaningful usage" criteria have not been firmly established yet, a preliminary listing of 22 points by the HIT Policy Committee has been released as initial recommendations of what could ultimately be the actual requirements for meaningful usage. The HIT Policy committee says the final version should be out by the end of the year.

Praxis EMR is ready for the 22 points right now. Infor-Med/Praxis is also offering a "money back guarantee" to providers that purchase Praxis now if the criteria specified by CCHIT is not met! Go to www.infor-med.com for details or contact Azalea Health Innovations for more information.

Q: If the "meaningful usage" requirements are met using a certified EMR/EHR, how will incentive payments actually be received?

A: Eligible professionals would receive incentive payments through the Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement systems.

Q: What happens if a physician does not adopt a certified EMR/EHR?

A: Eligible professionals who do not adopt and meaningfully use an EMR/EHR by 2014 will actually be penalized beginning in 2015, and for the next few years beyond that, with increasing penalties yearly.

Q: When would incentives be paid?

A: The bonus (or incentive) payments from CMS would be received at the beginning of the year following participation. For example, if a provider fully complies with the requirements in 2010 (the first year possible) payment will be at the beginning of 2011. Thus, 2011 is the first year that payments will be made.

Eligible professionals who have been using a certified EHR in the approved format since *before* the ARRA was developed will also be entitled to the maximum incentive, with payment at the beginning of 2011.

Q: How much can physicians be paid?

A: Payments are substantial especially if an eligible professional participates in the program starting in 2010. Eligible professionals using an EMR/EHR right now based upon what the specified criteria will be will have already ensured maximum reimbursement for themselves.

The payment for specified EMR/EHR usage in 2010 (or for current EMR/EHR usage) is \$18,000 in 2011. Over the course of the five year reimbursement program, a total of \$44,000 will have been paid. The later usage starts, the less the payments will be. Note: Rural providers may be eligible for an additional 10% in reimbursements from Medicare.

The table below details total potential payments to eligible professionals under the program, as reimbursable by Medicare: Note: This is per physician provider in a qualifying medical practice. A practice with 3 physicians would be eligible for a total of \$132,000 in reimbursements.

Year First Qualified	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
2011	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$44,000
2012	\$0	\$18,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$44,000
2013	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$39,000
2014	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$24,000
2015 or Later	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Q: What is the formula for paying Medicare eligible professionals?

A: Medicare eligible professionals will be incentivized based upon 75% of their Medicare payments for the year. Thus, in order to obtain the maximum \$18,000 in the first year, at least \$24,000 in Medicare payments must have been paid to the eligible professional in 2010 ($\$24,000 \times 75\% = \$18,000$). The same formula applies for the ensuing years.

Q: What about Medicaid eligible professionals?

A: If you meet any of the following criteria with Medicaid patient volume as estimated in accordance with a method established by the HHS Secretary, your incentive can be as much as \$63,750 as an eligible professional who:

1. Is not hospital-based and who has at least 30% of his / her patient volume attributable to individuals receiving medical assistance under this title.
2. Is not hospital-based and has at least 20% of his / her patient volume attributable to individuals receiving medical assistance under this title.
3. Practices predominantly in a federally qualified health center or rural health clinic and has at least 30% of his / her patient volume attributable to needy individuals.

If you are in any of these three categories, Stimulus legislation calls for **up to \$63,750** in federal contributions toward the “meaningful usage” of a certified EHR, as opposed to the maximum of \$44,000 for Medicare eligible professionals.

Q: Can eligible professionals benefit by Medicare *and* Medicaid incentives?

A: No. ARRA incentives apply to one or the other, but not both.

Q: Are incentives paid per eligible professional or per practice?

A: Per eligible provider! If a practice has more than one eligible professional, each one individually is eligible for their own incentives.



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