



Media Release

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Arkansas Medicaid to Launch Electronic Health Records Incentive Program

Starting today, eligible medical professionals and hospitals have the opportunity to apply for financial assistance in converting their patients' paper records to electronic form through the new Medicaid Electronic Health Record Incentive Program (EHR).

The program was created to encourage eligible health care professionals, clinics and hospitals that predominantly care for Medicaid patients to adopt, implement or upgrade to Office of the National Coordinator (ONC)-certified electronic health record technologies. The health care providers who receive incentive payments may otherwise struggle to obtain useful electronic health records software and use it in a meaningful way that would benefit all patients in their offices, clinics or hospitals.

"The Medicaid incentive program is an important support for medical professionals to invest their money and time in implementing electronic health records that can help coordinate and improve health care for their patients," said Dr. William Golden, Arkansas Medicaid Medical Director. "It is a timely opportunity for our health system to modernize its processes of care."

These electronic health records are a critical part of improving how we use health information more effectively and more timely in the care process. Once a patient's records are electronic, providers across the state will be able to access the information in the medical records quickly using the health information network called SHARE, the State Health Alliance for Records Exchange. The ultimate goal is to have this important health information available only to authorized health care professionals no matter where in Arkansas they are and available at every point of service.

"We encourage all Medicaid eligible healthcare providers to take these first steps towards qualifying to adopt and use electronic health record technology," said Ray Scott, state director for the Office of Health Information Technology. "We believe the use of health information technology will

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help the provider and patient by making important health information available when it's needed and where it's needed so they are making better-informed health care decisions.”

Initial incentive payments are based on adoption, implementation or upgrade of certified EHR technology, while following annual payments are based on meaningful use of that technology. Incentive payments are available to eligible hospitals for four years and eligible professionals for six years.

Eligible hospitals and professionals must register for the program through CMS and then a state-wide provider portal, both of which can be accessed through the Arkansas Medicaid website, www.medicaid.state.ar.us. More information on the EHR incentive payments can be found at the same site or the CMS website at: www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms.