



October 22, 2009

Economic Stimulus Promises Electronic Health Record Incentive Payments

Dear Provider:

On February 17, 2009, the President signed the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#). The signing of this legislation secured the dedication of \$33 billion in Federal funding for Medicaid and Medicare incentives for physicians and hospitals that demonstrate "meaningful use" of Electronic Health Records (EHRs). CMS intends to publish a proposed rule in late 2009 to propose a definition of meaningful use of certified Electronic Health Records (EHR) technology and establish criteria for the incentives programs. CMS is working extensively with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to identify the proposed criteria.

In order to qualify for these incentives and to take maximum advantage of any associated bonus payments, providers must be validated as having adopted and having made meaningful use of qualified EHRs by January 2011. Incentive payments will continue from 2011 until 2015 for those providers who continue to exhibit their "meaningful use" status. However, starting in 2015, those providers who have not adopted EHR technology will begin to have their fee schedules penalized 1 percent, increasing each subsequent year to a maximum of 5 percent. To avoid any applicable penalties, we strongly encourage you to implement EHR technology.

Free CME seminars to help you implement EHR technology are currently being held throughout the state. Space is limited, so register today.

The seminars will cover:

- How to select the right system
- How to prepare your practice for successful implementation
- How to develop effective documentation templates
- How to use an EHR system to collect and report quality data
- Where to find money to fund EHR technology
- What type of broadband Internet is needed to support EHR

AmeriHealth Mercy supports the federal government's desire to have all physicians and medical practices use EHRs, and these seminars are aimed to give you the tools to get started with EHRs or take your current EHRs to the next level.

For more information about EHR technology or to register for a seminar, go to our Web site or to <http://www.pamedsoc.org/MainMenuCategories/PracticeManagement/eHealth/EHR-seminar.aspx>.

Thank you for your participation in the AmeriHealth Mercy network and for your continued commitment to our members.

Sincerely,

Steven Orndorff
Associate Vice President
Provider and Community Affairs

AmeriHealth Mercy Health Plan

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