

Adopt, Implement, or Upgrade

Idaho Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Program

Created March 2012

Note to Providers: There is a good possibility that business processes will change after the program is launched. Potential efficiencies as well as potential problems are likely to become evident. This paper describes the business as of spring 2012. Please be sure to return to the information on the website and in the provider handbook often for updates. Creation dates will be noted on each paper.

Introduction

In the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, eligible professionals (EPs) and eligible hospitals can receive incentive payments in their first year of participation through an option called “adopt, implement, or upgrade.” This is commonly referred to as AIU. The AIU option is offered in recognition of EPs and hospitals that may not be ready to “meaningfully use” certified EHR technology in the first payment year. Briefly, the EHR final rule and regulations define AIU as follows:

- *Adopt: To “acquire, purchase, or secure access to certified EHR technology.”*
There is evidence that a provider demonstrated actual installation prior to the incentive, rather than “efforts” to install. We stated that this evidence would serve to differentiate between activities that may not result in installation (for example, researching EHRs or interviewing EHR vendors) and actual purchase/acquisition or installation. Acquisition or purchase does not necessarily mean the certified EHR technology is installed and functioning.
- *Implement: To “install or commence utilization of certified EHR technology.”*
The provider has installed certified EHR technology and has started using the certified EHR technology in his or her clinical practice. Implementation activities would include staff training in the certified EHR technology, the data entry of their patients’ demographic data into the EHR, or establishing data exchange agreements and relationships between the provider’s certified EHR technology and other providers, such as laboratories and pharmacies.
- *Upgrade: To “expand the available functionality of certified EHR technology.”*
The provider has added clinical decision support, e-prescribing functionality, or other enhancements that facilitate the meaningful use of certified EHR technology. An example of upgrading that would qualify for the EHR incentive payment would be upgrading from an existing EHR to a newer version that is certified per the EHR certification criteria promulgated by the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) related to meaningful use. Upgrading may also mean expanding the functionality of an EHR in order to render it certifiable per the ONC EHR certification criteria (<http://onc-chpl.force.com/ehrcert>).

Submitting AIU Documentation

States must verify that providers have met this requirement, and CMS suggests submitting a vendor contract, or other legally binding documentation, from providers to ensure the existence of EHR technology. Because certified EHR technology is the fulcrum for everything the incentive program was designed to accomplish, Idaho will validate the AIU of all EPs and hospitals who take advantage of this option.

Regardless of whether the EP or hospital is adopting, implementing, or upgrading, the documentation that will sufficiently validate AIU will, at a minimum:

- Identify the specific EHR technology and modules being adopted or already in use.
- Indicate that certified EHR technology has been acquired, purchased, or a third party EHR vendor is under contract such that financial documents have been processed and are available.
- Be a business record or transaction, rather than a promise, pledge, or plan to adopt EHR.

So long as these three requirements are met, business documentation that verifies third-party engagement will be considered the most reliable form of AIU validation. Examples of such documentation include a signed vendor contract, a receipt of purchase, a valid user agreement, a signed lease agreement, or other legally binding documentation. A letter from the EHR vendor is not sufficient.

In addition to the AIU documentation, Idaho is also asking EPs (not hospitals) to include evidence of the number of licenses a practice or clinic has access to. Blanket licenses, which do not identify the number of licenses but rather the site where there is license to use the system, are acceptable. These will be used primarily at time of audit.

In the interest of minimizing administrative burden, it is suggested that in group practices and clinics, the administration gather the AIU and license documentation only once, scan it if needed, create a PDF, and provide it to all associated EPs so they may attach it to their Idaho application/attestation form at the time that form is submitted to Idaho Medicaid.

State Validation Process

Once the application/attestation form is complete and submitted to Idaho Medicaid, the EHR technology identified in the documentation will be reconciled with the provider's certification number as issued by the ONC. Potential payments will be delayed and the provider will be contacted if the EHR technology identified in the documentation does not reconcile with the ONC certification number the provider was issued. Please see the Informational Paper about *Getting a Certified CMS EHR Certification Number* for further details.

Note on Dual Eligible Hospitals

If you have already been approved for payment and declared a meaningful user for the Medicare Program, you DO NOT have to include the AIU documentation when you apply to Medicaid. If you have registered for a Medicare incentive payment as well as a Medicaid payment but have

not yet completed the attestation process for Medicare and been approved for payment, you WILL HAVE to submit AIU documentation to Idaho Medicaid.

Additional Information

For questions about this or other issues concerning the Idaho EHR Incentive Program, please go to www.MedicaidEHR.dhw.idaho.gov. There you will find an “Ask the Program” feature that will allow you to send questions to program staff. You can also call the Idaho Medicaid EHR Program Helpdesk at (208) 332-7989.