

The electronic health record (EHR) incentive program was established as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 whereby eligible health care professionals can qualify for Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments when they adopt certified EHR technology and use it to demonstrate "meaningful use." The definition of [meaningful use](#) is evolving in three stages with the goal of demonstrating that the quality of health care has been improved with the use of EHR technology. The e-prescribing program has also become part of the EHR incentive program with electronic prescribing via certified EHR technology now being a requirement for eligible professionals in order to achieve meaningful use under the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs

## WHAT IS THE EHR INCENTIVE?

The incentive payment amount differs whether one is participating in the Medicare or Medicaid incentive program. Professionals participating in the [Medicare](#) program who adopt a certified EHR can receive up to \$44,000 per professional over 5 years. To get the maximum [incentive payment](#), Medicare [eligible professionals](#) should have started participating by 2012. If the Medicare eligible professional does not participate in the program by 2015, they will face a payment adjustment in their Medicare reimbursement that start at 1% and can go as high as 5%.

Medicare Incentives		
Payment Year	If a Medicare Eligible Professional Qualifies to Receive First Payment in 2012	If a Medicare Eligible Professional Qualifies to Receive First Payment in 2013
2012	\$18,000	
2013	\$12,000	\$15,000
2014	\$8,000	\$12,000
2015	\$4,000	\$8,000
2016	\$2,000	\$4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,000</b>	<b>\$39,000</b>

The [Medicaid](#) EHR incentive program is offered voluntarily by individual states. Eligible professionals participating in the Medicaid program can receive up to \$63,750 over the 6 years that they choose to participate in the program. Check with your State Medicaid agency for more information.

Medicaid Incentives		
Payment Year	Medicaid Eligible Professionals Qualify to Receive First Payment in 2012	Medicaid Eligible Professionals Qualify to Receive First Payment in 2013
2012	\$21,250	
2013	\$8,500	\$21,250
2014	\$8,500	\$8,500
2015	\$8,500	\$8,500
2016	\$8,500	\$8,500
2017	\$8,500	\$8,500
2018	0	\$8,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63,750</b>	<b>\$63,750</b>

In order to receive the EHR payment, an eligible professional must meaningfully use a certified EHR technology. There is a listing of the [certified products](#) can be found on the Health Information Technology [Web site](#). Eligible professionals can participate in either or both programs and not be penalized for doing this before the deadline.

## WHAT ARE THE THREE STAGES OF MEANINGFUL USE?

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 specify three main components of [meaningful use](#):

**Stage 1**-started in 2011 and is the beginning point for all providers. This stage requires transferring data to EHRs to share information including electronic copies and visit summaries for patients.

**Stage 2**-Was implemented in 2014 with flexibility regarding reporting of new standards such as online access for patients to their health information and electronic health information exchange between providers.

**Stage 3**- is expected to be implemented in 2016 with a goal to demonstrate that the quality of health care has been improved.

## HOW DO I BECOME INCENTIVE ELIGIBLE?

To begin participating in the first stage, an [eligible professional](#) must begin reporting in any continuous 90-day period within the first calendar year. For subsequent years, the reporting period will be the entire calendar year. The first stage criteria was defined such that eligible professionals must qualify for an exclusion to all 15 core objectives, 5 out of 10 menu set objectives, and 6 clinical quality measures in order to qualify for EHR incentive payment. A description of these requirements may be found at the CMS EHR Incentive program [website](#).

## DOES PARTICIPATING IN THE EHR INCENTIVE PROGRAM LIMIT ME FROM PARTICIPATING IN OTHER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS?

Participation in the EHR incentive program does not limit you from participating in other Medicare incentive programs.

Eligible professionals must choose one EHR incentive program for participation, but before 2015 may switch programs only once after the first incentive payment is initiated.

For More Information Please Visit the CMS Website [EHR Page](#).