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Meaningful Use

What is Meaningful Use?

Meaningful Use is a government incentive program to reward eligible professionals (EP) and eligible hospitals (EH) who invest in electronic health records (EHR). It is part of the HITECH Act, which is part of the much larger American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). To receive incentive payments, the EPs and EHs must demonstrate that they are "meaningfully using the EHR" by meeting a set of objective measurements established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Additionally, EPs and EHs must demonstrate their ability to report on a set of clinical quality measures.

In July 2010, Meaningful Use Stage 1 Final Rule was published by CMS, with input from the HIT Policy and HIT Standards Committees.

Initiatives of Meaningful Use

Meaningful Use is focused on the following 5 initiatives:

1. Improve quality, safety, efficiency, and reduce health disparities
2. Engage patients and families
3. Improve care coordination
4. Improve population and public health
5. Ensure adequate privacy and security protections for personal health information

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Meaningful Use is intended to result in patient-centered, evidence-based, prevention-oriented, efficient, and equitable health care.

STAGES OF MEANINGFUL USE

A Phased Approach to Allow for a Graduated Arrival to the Ultimate Goal

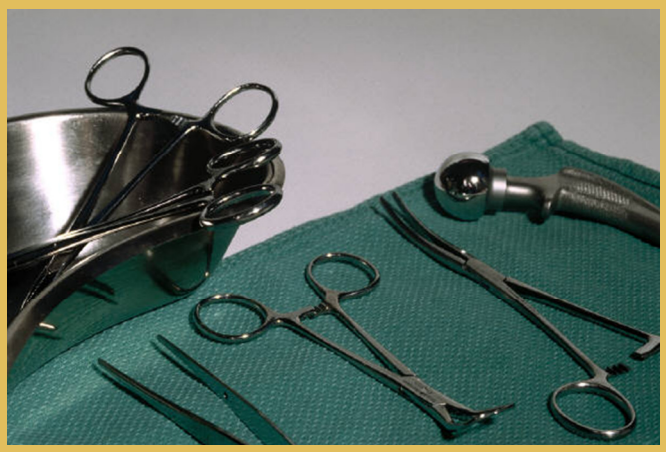
Meaningful Use is divided into 3 tiers, or stages. This phased approach should allow for a graduated arrival to the ultimate goal.

STAGE 1:

Stage 1 focuses on "electronically capturing health information in a structured format; using that information to track key clinical conditions and communicating that information for care coordination purposes", "implementing clinical decision support tools to facilitate disease and medication management; using the EHRs to engage patients and reporting clinical quality measures and public health information".[1]

Stage 1 has been extended into 3 reporting years.

Covenant Healthcare is currently in Year 2 of Stage 1.



STAGE 2:

The Stage 2 Proposed Rule has been released and the comment period ended May 7, 2012.

The Final Rule for Stage 2 is expected to be published by the end of summer.

STAGE 2:

The goals of Stage 2 are to expand upon Stage 1 requirements by altering the expectations and adding new requirements that were unable to be considered as a requirement for Stage 1, but are necessary to prepare for Stage 3. They anticipate increasing current thresholds, adding new objectives, and increasing the expectations of functionalities. Stage 2 requirements are expected to "include rigorous expectations for health information exchange, including more demanding requirements for e-prescribing and incorporating structured laboratory results and the expectation that providers will electronically transmit patient care summaries to support transitions in care across unaffiliated providers, settings and EHR systems".[2]

STAGE 3:

Much like Stage 2, the goals of Stage 3 are to expand upon Stage 2 requirements to reach the ultimate goal of Meaningful Use. New objectives may be proposed as new functions are developed with the intent to ensure that meaningful use encourages patient-centric, interoperable health information exchange across providers.

Reference:
Federal Register /Vol. 75, No. 144 /Wednesday, July 28, 2010 /Rules and Regulations