

Consumer-Purchaser DISCLOSURE PROJECT

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Consumer and Purchaser Organizations Commend CMS Plan for Meaningful Use, Call for More Progress

(May 7, 2012) Twenty-six consumer and purchaser organizations affiliated with the Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project (CPDP) praised the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for moving the federal Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Program (otherwise known as “Meaningful Use”) in the right direction.

In comments filed today, the groups strongly backed the agency’s commitment to advancing patient and family engagement in the rule proposed on February 23, lauding CMS for expecting health providers who receive federal incentive payments to give patients online access to their health information through portals, transmission of care summaries, and secure messaging. “The health care system lags far behind other industries in putting critical and timely information into the hands of patients, and the rule proposed by CMS takes a huge step toward closing that gap,” said Christine Bechtel, Vice President of the National Partnership for Women & Families.

The coalition also supports progress in other areas, such as leveraging EHRs to support evidence-based care, ensure medication safety, and avoid duplicative imaging.

At the same time, the coalition calls on CMS to make improvements in key areas as it drafts the final Meaningful Use regulation, urging CMS to set higher expectations for clinicians and hospitals to exchange health information electronically. “Given the \$44 billion taxpayer investment in the program, virtually all transmissions of health information from one provider to another should happen electronically; otherwise EHRs won’t live up to their potential to improve care coordination and reduce medical errors,” emphasized David Lansky, President and CEO of the Pacific Business Group on Health.

The coalition also encourages CMS to set high standards for clinical quality measures. The Meaningful Use program should take advantage of EHRs to report quality measures that tell us how well providers care for their patients – particularly in improving health outcomes, coordinating care among providers, engaging patients, and using health care resources wisely. Unfortunately, the proposed rule falls short of meeting this goal. “We desperately need to rapidly develop high value quality measures and build them into Meaningful Use. Otherwise the federal government won’t know if this program and others like it are improving health outcomes, reducing costs, rewarding value, or supporting the National Quality Strategy” said Gerry Shea, Assistant to the President for Governmental Affairs at the AFL-CIO.

CPDP submitted formal comments on CMS’ proposed rule for Meaningful Use. A copy of the letter can be found [here](#). For more information about CPDP, please visit www.healthcaaredisclosure.org.

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The Empowered Patient Coalition

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