



CMS plans complete overhaul of EHR incentive programs, announces new patient access initiatives

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma [announced](#) on March 6, 2018, at the Health Information and Management Systems Society conference that CMS is planning to overhaul the meaningful use requirements of the electronic health record (EHR) incentive programs. CMS did not announce specific changes but said its goals are to refocus the EHR programs on interoperability and to reduce the time and compliance cost required for providers to comply with meaningful use requirements. The announced overhaul follows the passing of a bill in February, which no longer requires the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services secretary to create increasingly stringent EHR incentive program reporting requirements.

In addition to the announced overhaul of the EHR incentive programs, CMS Administrator Verma also announced two new initiatives designed to improve patient access to health records. The first initiative, MyHealthEData, focuses on breaking down barriers that prevent patients from having electronic access to their health records on an application or device of their choice. The initiative will seek to ensure that patients have access to their entire health record, so patients can actively seek out health care service providers that meet their health needs.

The second initiative, [Medicare Blue Button 2.0](#), is a new tool that will allow patients to access and share their health care information in a secure and universal digital format. The tool will enable Medicare patients to connect their claims data to secure applications and providers they trust and will allow patients to access and share their information with new health care providers. CMS hopes that the new tool will lead to less duplication in testing and will promote increased competition among technology

innovators who serve the Medicare population.

Bricker & Eckler has extensive experience assisting hospitals with meaningful use attestations, associated documentation and responding to audits. For assistance, please contact the authors or any member of our health care team.

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