

Updates to Meaningful Use Timeline - No Delay to Stage 2

By Kansas Foundation for Medical Care

On December 6, 2013, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed a new timeline for the implementation of Meaningful Use for the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs. Under the revised timeline, Stage 2 will be extended through 2016 and Stage 3 will begin in 2017 for those providers that have completed at least two years in Stage 2.

Additionally, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) proposed an approach for certification that allows ample time for developers to create and distribute certified EHR technology before Stage 3 begins.

The goal of these changes are two-fold: first, to allow CMS and ONC to focus efforts on the successful implementation of the enhanced patient engagement, interoperability and health information exchange requirements in Stage 2; and second, to utilize data from Stage 2 participation to inform policy decisions for Stage 3.

The phased approach to program participation helps providers move from creating information in Stage 1, to exchanging information in Stage 2, to focusing on improved outcomes in Stage 3. This timeline allows for program analysis of Stage 2 data to inform the improvements in care delivery outcomes in Stage 3.

According to the Government Accountability Office, professionals who received technical assistance from a Regional Extension Center in 2012 [were 1.9 times more likely](#) to receive an incentive payment than those who did not. The KFMC Regional Extension Center has assisted 679 Kansas providers and 57 Critical Access and Rural Hospital collect a combined \$57 million in EHR incentive payments and is prepared to continue supporting providers in their pursuit of quality care through the meaningful use of their electronic health records (EHRs). Work with the Critical Access and Rural Hospitals is delivered through a partnership with the Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation. To learn more about the KFMC Regional Extension Center and our work with providers, visit kfmc.org.

To sustain the work of the Kansas REC as federal funding is exhausted, the Kansas Foundation for Medical Care (KFMC) and the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved (KAMU) have sponsored a not-for-profit organization, Synōvim Healthcare Solutions. Synōvim, comprised of REC staff, is in partnership with these organizations to help assist Kansas providers with their health information technology and quality improvement needs. To learn more about the services Synōvim offers, visit synovim.org.

What does the new timeline mean for you?

Eligible professionals would begin Stage 3 in January 2017, at the start of the calendar year. Eligible hospitals and critical access hospitals would begin Stage 3 at the start of the federal fiscal year, October 1, 2016.

Additional information regarding the CMS announcement can be found at the following links:

CMS: http://www.cms.gov/eHealth/ListServ_Stage3Implementation.html

Modern Healthcare:

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20131206/NEWS/312069950/breaking-meaningful-use-deadline-pushed-back-one-year#>