



## Client Alert



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### **Georgia Department of Community Health Opens Provider Registration for the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program**

The Department of Community Health announced on its website last week that it had opened provider registration for its Medicaid Electronic Health Records (EHR) Incentive Program. This program is a federally-funded incentive program designed to promote the meaningful use of certified electronic health record technology by eligible Medicaid providers. Registration for the program was made available on September 5, 2011, at [www.mmis.georgia.gov](http://www.mmis.georgia.gov).

The Medicaid EHR Incentive Program, which parallels a similar voluntary incentive program for Medicare providers, will provide payments to eligible professionals (including physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives and dentists) and eligible hospitals (acute care hospitals, critical access hospitals and children's hospitals) as they adopt, implement, upgrade, or successfully demonstrate the meaningful use of certified EHR technology during the first year of program participation and demonstrate continuing meaningful use of the technology for up to five remaining years of participation in the program.

By maximizing their participation in the Medicaid program, eligible professionals have the potential to receive up to \$63,750 over the program's planned six years. Hospital payments are based on a number of factors, but include, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), a \$2 million base payment. In Georgia, Medicaid EHR Incentive Program payments are set to begin this month. In order to receive the payments, providers must meet patient volume thresholds pursuant to state requirements, in addition to satisfying "meaningful use" criteria in accordance with standards developed by CMS and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

Both the Medicare and Medicaid programs are based upon provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. CMS published the final version of the federal rule pursuant to which the meaningful use incentive programs were established in July of 2010. Registration in the Medicare program was made available earlier this year at [www.cms.gov/ehr](http://www.cms.gov/ehr).

The final rule is available at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-17207.pdf>.

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