



# News Release

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## **HHS announces 2013 agenda to bring down costs and improve quality of care through implementation of health information technology**

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Acting Administrator Marilyn Tavenner and the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology Farzad Mostashari, M.D., today announced HHS's plan to accelerate health information exchange (HIE) and build a seamless and secure flow of information essential to transforming the health care system.

"Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, we are improving the way care is delivered while lowering costs," said Acting Administrator Tavenner. "We are already seeing benefits, such as a reduction in hospital readmissions due to these reforms. Health IT and the secure exchange of information across providers are crucial to reforming the system, and must be a routine part of care delivery."

This year, HHS will:

- **Set aggressive goals for 2013:** HHS is setting the goal of 50 percent of physician offices using electronic health records (EHR) and 80 percent of eligible hospitals receiving meaningful use incentive payments by the end of 2013.
- **Increase the emphasis on interoperability:** HHS will increase its emphasis on ensuring electronic exchange across providers. It will start that effort by issuing today a request for information (RFI) seeking public input about a variety of policies that will strengthen the business case for electronic exchange across providers to ensure patients' health information will follow them seamlessly and securely wherever they access care.
- **Enhance the effective use of electronic health records through initiatives like the Blue Button initiative.** Medicare beneficiaries can access their full Medicare records online today. HHS is working with the Veterans Administration and more than 450 different organizations to make health care information available to patients and health plan members. HHS is also encouraging Medicare Advantage plans to expand the use of Blue Button to provide beneficiaries with one-click secure access to their health information.

- **Implement Meaningful Use Stage 2:** HHS is implementing rules that define what data must be able to be exchanged between Health IT systems, including how data will be structured and coded so that providers will have one uniform way to format and securely send data.
- **Underscoring program integrity:** HHS is taking new steps to ensure the integrity of the program is sound and technology is not being used to game the system. For example, it is conducting extensive medical reviews and issuing Comparative Billing reports that identify providers.

The goals build on the significant progress HHS and its partners have already made on expanding health information technology use. EHR adoption has tripled since 2010, increasing to 44 percent in 2012 and computerized physician order entry has more than doubled (increased 168 percent) since 2008.

"The 2014 standards for electronic health records create the technical capacity for providers to be able to share information with each other and with the patient," said Dr. Mostashari. "Through the RFI, we are interested in hearing about policies that could provide an even greater business case for such information sharing."

In addition to seeking public input, the RFI also discusses several potential new policies and ideas to accelerate interoperability and exchange of a patient's health information across care settings so that they can deliver better and more affordable care to their patients.

The RFI can be found at [http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2013-05266\\_PI.pdf](http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2013-05266_PI.pdf) Deadline for comments is April 21, 2013.

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