

2014 Incentive Programs: Action Items



ARTICLE 11.24.14 DEAN DORTON

It is essential that hospitals are attentive to the fact that the December 31st Medicare Meaningful Use attestations deadline is quickly approaching. In addition, just as significant, the Medicaid Incentive Program deadlines loom shortly thereafter. Hospitals should have specific steps outlined to complete in addition to capturing, recording and reporting clinical data.

The following steps can easily yield hundreds of thousands of extra incentive dollars, can improve the accuracy of financial projections, and can prevent financial surprises:

- Regularly check submission and payment status
- Re-evaluate the source and timing of data used on applications for both programs
- Become familiar with appeal topics, deadlines, and procedures
- Develop or refine an approach to list the Medicare incentive calculation on protested items
- Update cost report schedules to prompt Meaningful Use data evaluation upon amendments
- Upon filing a cost report, projected payments and accounting for incentives should be updated

The above steps are suggested as a result of the following:

- Significant payment delays resulted for many who did not monitor their status in past years
- Factors that drive larger incentive payments are regularly underutilized
- Non-compliant data is sometimes inadvertently included leading to future consequences
- Data specific situations and program nuances are unfamiliar territory for providers
- This relatively "new" topic is not a standard step in most cost reporting processes
- Initial Medicare Incentive payments are settled on a future Medicare cost report

It is a best practice to have representatives from Finance/Reimbursement, Clinical Operations, and Information Technology working together (to evaluate) participation in the programs every year. Delegating all facets of participation in these programs to one or two departments can result in inefficient participation and unexpected financial circumstances.

To discuss a review of your incentive program participation at no cost to your organization please contact Adam Blackwell, Associate Director of Healthcare Consulting, at 859-425-7753 or ablackwell@deandorton.com.