Are you a meaningful IT user?

By Kristina Ziehler, MPH

How close are you to obtaining full meaningful use status? Members can take advantage of $44,000 in meaningful use incentives during a five-year period under the Medicare portion of the program. However, the later that eligible professionals (EPs) who are defined by the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive program start the process, the fewer dollars will be available. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has started auditing EPs who received the incentive payments, which is why it is important to retain attestation documentation. Feb. 28 was the last day to register and attest to receive an incentive payment for 2012. Will you be ready for 2013?

And the survey says...

More than 54 percent of respondents are participating in the meaningful use program, according to the MGMA Performance and Practices of Successful Medical Groups: 2012 Report Based on 2011 Data. A smaller percentage (16.5 percent) is not participating because these members do not have EHRs. Nearly 5 percent are not participating because even though they have an EHR, it is not yet certified.

“EHRs continue to evolve to allow medical practices the ability to meet the requirements of the CMS incentive program,” says Jeff Smith, MBA, CMPE, CPA, CGMA, chief executive officer, PMSI, Pottstown, Pa. “The survey … highlights the functionality of the installed systems, which facilitate improvements in the quality and efficiency of patient care. Ultimately, this should not only improve the health of our patients but also drive down healthcare costs,” adds Smith, who is the MGMA Survey Advisory Committee chair.

In further analysis, 67 percent of the professionals who participated in the MGMA Performance and Practices of Successful Medical Groups: 2012 Report Based on 2011 Data reported that their EHRs have the ability to electronically exchange key clinical information outside their practice to providers and other patient-authorized entities. An overwhelming 97.1 percent reported that their EHRs can maintain an active medication list. Check out these other capabilities that medical practice administrators reported in the table to the left. How does your EHR measure up?

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