



eRECORDS, Inc.'s HITECH Meaningful News is a medium to share the latest news, updates and analysis in the world of ARRA, HITECH Act and "meaningful use". eRECORDS advisors collate, review and assess mountain of data down to the most relevant information so that you can focus your time in delivering the highest quality of healthcare.

eRECORDS Perspectives

In this section, we share what's been the most exciting, scary or intriguing for us in the areas of HITECH Act, Meaningful Use and Health IT.

It's getting real. Let's get to work!

The latest CMS' "EHR Incentive Program: Registration and Attestation for EP" webinar was held on 9/9/2011. Here's the link to the [presentation](#) material (pdf). Most of the information covered were similar to other webinars held by CMS in the past – qualification requirements, how to register on the web site and how to attest to Stage 1 for Medicare program. What ended being the real surprise, especially for us who's been on all of these webinars from the beginning, came at the Q & A session. Until this webinar, questions were mostly basic ("How do I qualify?", "When?", "What about the eRx incentive program?", "So all I have to do is buy an EHR and I meet meaningful use?") and theoretical ("Can I qualify for both Medicare & Medicaid?", "What if I can't do this or what if they can't do this?").

In this webinar, the questions were more complex and came from providers and representatives who are obviously in the thick of things. Dentists, Optometrists and Radiologists asked about specific situation regarding their participation. There were questions about hiring a new providers and impact on his/her incentive participations. There were inquiries about audits, possible issues with assigning proxy and so on.

These questions came from doing, not just reading or wondering... it's real. Let's get to work!

Interesting Facts and Figures

For more interesting facts and figures, follow us on twitter @HITstats - www.twitter.com/HITstats.

90,000 & \$652M. Enrollees in EHR incentive program and how much has been [paid](#) by CMS.

479 and 279. Number of Complete and Modular certified Ambulatory EHRs as of September 15, 2011 at [CHPL](#).

7,900,000 and 30,750. How many health records were [exposed](#) in how many cases since September 2009.

Hawaii. Ranked #1 in The [Well-Being Index](#) which measures scores in life evaluation, emotional health, work environment, physical health, healthy behaviors, and access to basic necessities.

16.3% & 16.1%. [Percent](#) of uninsured in 2010 and 2009. Statistically insignificant change. Interestingly odd.

Latest Meaningful News

National

Did you know National Health IT week is September 11 to September 17? President Obama, in continuing effort to place priority in Health IT, [announced](#) that the week from September 11 to September 17 to be the National Health Information Technology week for 2011. In the announcement, President Obama urged all Americans to visit the newly launched HealthIT.gov website.

ONC releases the Final version of the Federal Health IT Strategic Plan. On September 12, ONC released the final version of its Federal Health IT Strategic Plan for 2011 through 2015. Final version incorporates 240 public comments received on the draft plan that was released in March. Some key details included in the final version are 1) establishing task force to handle certain privacy and security issues, 2) supporting efforts to refine EHR usability testing, 3) helping vendors develop EHR products that improve data portability, and 4) scaling up consumer outreach and education campaigns. For additional information, click [here](#).

HHS publishes a plan to update regulations to deal with new technologies such as telemedicine and better aligning similar rules. As a response to President Obama's executive order to improve efficiency, HHS and other agencies submitted plans in May that became final in late August. HHS's plan includes loosening rules on telemedicine, aligning stimulus law reporting requirements for EHR Incentive Programs and previous programs (e.g. eRx Incentive Program) and reducing conflicts between Medicaid and Medicare rules. For more details, click [here](#).

CMS unveils final rule on Medicare eRx incentives. The CMS has made available the final rule outlining revisions to the Medicare E-Prescribing Incentive Program. As described in recent articles ([Health Data Management](#) - 8/31, [Healthcare IT News](#) – 8/31), the final rule includes clarification of “hardship exemption” from eRx program to avoid penalties. One of these exemptions includes any providers who have registered to participate in the EHR Incentive Program and has adopted an ONC certified EHR system. The American Medical Association (AMA) showed support for the added flexibility specified in the “hardship exemption” and better alignment between eRx and EHR Incentive Programs. However, AMA [raised concerns](#) that physicians only have a short period of time to apply for an exemption to avoid penalties in 2012.

Use “Blue Button” to access your health information. At least that's the idea. The [Blue Button Initiative](#) was kicked off by CMS and the Department of Veterans affairs in an effort to accelerate patient access to their health records. With the Blue Button, you can download, view and share your information as you see fit. EHR vendors, payers, corporations and state governments are rolling out or planning to roll out Blue Button capability. The idea sounds great. Now, will there be a mass adoption by organizations and the general public?

HHS appoints new Director of Office for Civil Rights. HHS [announced](#) that Leon Rodriguez will be the new Director of Office for Civil Rights, the agency responsible for administering and enforcing the HIPAA rules. An [article](#) written at Privacy and Security Law Blog shares some great insights on why the new Director will continue its predecessors of strong enforcements of the HIPAA rules.

ONC Names Approved Accreditor for EHR Certification Program. ONC has [named](#) American National

Standard Institute (ANSI) as the ONC-AA (ONC Authorized Accreditor). This sole accreditor will be tasked with accrediting ONC authorized EHR certification entities. Current authorized EHR certification entities include Surescripts, ICSA Labs, SLI Global Solutions, InfoGard Laboratories, CCHIT and Drummond Group. ANSI has [announced](#) that it is accepting applications from organizations seeking to receive accreditation to certify electronic health records under the permanent certification program for meaningful use. ANSI is accepting applications through Oct. 7, and the permanent program is slated to replace the temporary certification program in 2012. (1.3)

CMS proposes to allow patients to get direct access to lab results. Due to the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1998 (CLIA), patients do not have direct access to their lab results. CMS has drafted a proposed rule that would remove this restriction and allow patients direct access to their lab results. For the proposed rule and more information, click [here](#).

ONC launches new website offering Health IT resources. ONC launched a new [website](#) called HealthIT.gov, designed to provide health IT guidance to healthcare providers and patients. The site will also provide answers to questions about the privacy of EHR systems and guidance on EHR implementation.

Standards Committee Endorses Set of EHR Vocabulary Standards. The Health IT Standards Committee has endorsed vocabulary standards and a guide for implementing the standards for specific quality reporting measures. The panel will call for the inclusion of the standards in Stage 2 of meaningful use. For more details, click [here](#).

HHS announces \$700 million Affordable Care Act funding opportunity to create jobs by building, renovating and repairing community health centers. This [announcement](#) has two funding opportunities for community health centers. One will provide approximately \$600 million to existing health centers across the country for longer-term projects to expand their facilities, hire more employees and serve more patients. The second funding opportunity emphasizes shorter-term projects and will provide approximately \$100 million to existing health centers to address immediate facility needs.

\$8.5M additional funding available for Beacon Community health centers. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), under the Affordable Care Act, announced that additional \$8.5M was awarded to 85 health centers located in Beacon Communities for Health IT adoption. For more information, click [here](#).

Meaningful Use Stage 1 unlikely to affect mortality rates. According to a [study](#) published in Health Affairs, a Stage 1 requirement for CPOE is unlikely to affect mortality rates for heart failures and heart attacks among hospitalized Medicare patients. However, Stage 2 and 3 requirements may have an effect due to the requirement to use CPOE for at least 60% and 80% respectively. Research has shown that using CPOE for more than 50% of patients with heart conditions is consistently associated with lower mortality rates for heart failures and heart attack. Stage 1's requirements of at least 30% fall short of this mark. For more details, click [here](#).

The Veterans Affairs Department launch site for open-source EHR development. The Veterans Affairs Department announced the department's proposed open-source development project for its VistA electronic health-record system and the launch of a [new website](#) and a new name for the project. For more details, click [here](#).

Study shows EHRs lead to better quality care... ? A [study](#) in the New England Journal of Medicine that

included more than 500 physicians and 27,000 patients with diabetes shows patients in practices that used electronic health records are more likely to have care and outcomes that meet recommended standards. Lead study author Dr. Randall Cebul [said](#) the greatest value of EHRs will come from their use with shared best practices and coaching. This study has made quite a bit of headlines, including ONC's [HealthIT Buzz](#), but it is important to note that we believe the study shows that EHR contributes to better compliance to care standards BUT not necessarily to the better outcomes.

Most Radiologists could qualify for the EHR Incentive Program but challenges exist. When the Continuing Extension Act of 2010 removed the outpatient hospital settings from the “hospital-based” determinant, most of the Radiologists became qualified for the EHR Incentive Program. That’s the good news. The bad news is that the Meaningful Use measurements were designed more for primary care physicians rather than specialists like Radiologists. For additional information about Radiologists and EHR Incentive Program, click [here](#).

Making progress towards Version 5010 conversion, but... Healthcare industry, after a late start, is starting to make good progress towards the Version 5010 conversion. However, it is almost given by the healthcare industry that full compliance will not be achieved by the conversion deadline. To read more about the good and the bad of Version 5010 conversion progress, click [here](#).

CMS posts widgets to help healthcare providers manage transition to HIPAA 5010, ICD-10. CMS has posted an online a set of “timeline widgets” to help healthcare providers manage the transition to HIPAA 5010 and ICD-10 standards. The widgets are tailored for payers, vendors and providers. These widgets can be used to determine where the healthcare provider should be in adopting the new standards at certain points prior to compliance dates. For more information, click [here](#) and for a new [fact sheet](#) (pdf) by CMS to help covered entities to better understand testing and the steps involved in conversion to Version 5010.

ONC launches Query Health project to search for population health data. Query Health project’s goal is to come up with standards and services that enables providers to send information requests and questions about population health to variety of places (mostly in EHRs) to receive results in secure manner. It would be interesting to see how successful Query Health will in liberating data from silos of EHR systems and vendors. For more details, click [here](#).

California

Cal eConnect CEO steps down. Effective August 18, Cal eConnect [announced](#) (pdf) that Carladenise Edwards will step down as the President and CEO of Cal eConnect. Ms. Edwards held this position since July 2010. Laura Landry, former Executive Director of the Western Health Information Network (WHIN), has been [introduced](#) (pdf) as the interim CEO of Cal eConnect.

California Human and Health Services (CA HHS) held its monthly webinar on September 8, 2011. This is a monthly webinar held by CA HHS to provide updates related to Health IT activities in California. Key highlights of the webinar are listed below. eRECORDS is also supplementing CA REC updates in this section with updates provided directly by the RECs:

- **California update.**
 - California hosted the latest ONC Regional Meeting in Los Angeles. Many of the California HIT stakeholders attend for this event. Key updates include:
 - Over 83,000 PPCPs have signed up for RECs across the nation. Over 10% of those PPCPs are in California.

- Focused sessions included discussions surrounding behavioral health, long term post acute care and rural health.
 - National Quality Strategy was also emphasized.
 - ONC is launched HealthIT.gov for providers and patients to get access helpful resources.
 - ONC also discussed a new report published by New England Journal of Medicine that showed benefits of EHRs.
 - Announced that Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) was also released for public comments surrounding meta data standards for Stage 2 Meaningful Use.
 - Final rule has also been released to expand the “hardship exemption” for the ePrescribing Incentive Program.

- **Medi-Cal update.**
 - Medi-Cal EHR Incentive Program registration/attestation launch dates have finally been determined.
 - Eligible Hospitals – October 3
 - Groups – November 15
 - Eligible Professionals – December 15
 - Definition of “Group” is still being discussed. CMS provides guidance for the definition but it’s up to each State to finalize the definition.

- **Cal eConnect update.**
 - Laura Landry has been named the interim CEO of Cal eConnect to replacing Carladenise Edwards who stepped down as CEO in August.
 - Held first HIE Community of Practice meeting with over 40 participants.
 - Next Community of Practice meeting will be held on 9/16 and will focus on:
 - ePrescribing
 - Lab data exchange
 - Clinical care summaries
 - Public health reporting
 - Stakeholder Summit is scheduled for 11/8 and registration is open. Secretary Diana Dooley has been confirmed as a speaker at the Summit.

- **California Telehealth Network (CTN) update.**
 - Hired Chief Operation Officer and will be announced shortly.
 - CTN now has 80 connected sites.
 - Booz Allen Hamilton completed the Business Planning work and the results will be presented to the Executive Committee and Board next week. Details of the Business Plan will be shared shortly.

- **CalHIPSO (Regional Extension Center for all of California except Orange and Los Angeles counties) update.**
 - Over 6,174 providers enrolled (4,652 at Milestone 1- 75% of goal). Only 1,535 subsidized PPCP slots left.
 - Over 1,400 providers achieved “Go-live” (1,127 at Milestone 2 – 18% of goal).
 - 10 providers attested to Meaningful Use.
 - 20 hospitals enrolled in the rural hospital supplemental funding program.
 - Outreach efforts will be focused on enrolling solo and small practices/providers.
 - S. Bre Jackson has joined as the new Chief Information Officer. She was formerly the Director of the Bay area LEC for Lumetra Healthcare Solutions.
 - Will also “soft” launch specialist provider service package to be offered to 70 specialists who have shown strong interest.
 - Planning to expand education and training resources for CalHIPSO members in partnership with HIMSS.

- **COREC (CalOptima Regional Extension Center, REC for Orange County) update.**

- 600 PPCPs have been enrolled.
 - 55% solo, 25% practice consortium, 20% CHCs
- Selected service partners and awaiting final approval from ONC.
- Selected preferred EHR vendors and are working through final contract negotiations.
- Outreach events are continuing through Orange County.
- **HITEC-LA (Regional Extension Center for Los Angeles County) update.**
 - 2,700 providers have been enrolled (2240 for M1).
 - 528 providers at “go live” with few achieving Meaningful Use.
 - Out of the \$2M LA Care Incentive fund, \$900K has been paid out to 257 providers so far.
- **National Indian REC-CA update (sub-recipient of National Indian REC to serve CA) .**
 - Goal is to assist 231 PPCPs. Already enrolled 100 providers.
 - In the process of setting up contracts with Consultants.
 - Currently have 3 staff dedicated to this organization.
- **Public Health update.**
 - Reiterated that CA Public Health cannot accept Immunization, Lab or Syndromic information electronically. It is recommended that this information is sent to regional registries. List of registries that can accept electronic submissions are on the Public Health website.
- **Workforce update.**
 - Partnering with CalHIPSO to see what type of training can be provided to incumbent staff (staff who are already working for health organizations) to better their knowledge and skills.

Other News

Surescripts network supports e-prescribing of controlled substance. As authorized by the [interim final DEA rule](#) (pdf) that took effect in June 1, 2010, controlled substance can be e-prescribed as long as stringent DEA security requirements are met. For more information, click [here](#).

Project will test mobile health for diabetes control. A pilot project in Texas involving HHS' Office of Minority Health will test the effectiveness of using mobile health tools to help patients manage diabetes and related chronic conditions. Specifically, delivering diabetes education videos to mobile devices. For the full story, click [here](#).

Cloud-based EHRs require unique security considerations. An [article](#) in iHealthBeat points out some fundamental privacy and security considerations for using cloud-based EHRs. Providers using cloud-based EHRs should consider issues such as who is responsible if a data breach occurs (provider or service provider) and how to get the medical data if the cloud-based EHR is no longer used.

Data breach at Stanford Hospital covering 20K patients. Stanford Hospital confirmed that a data breach caused data on more than 20,000 emergency department patients to be publicly posted to a commercial website for one year. The breach has been reported HHS and HHS will likely conduct an investigation. The hospital is offering no cost identity theft protection services to affected patients. For more details, click [here](#).

The trend of Hospitals hiring local physicians is quickening. In a race to increase market share and revenue, hospitals are hiring more local physicians. In 2009, half the new doctors were hired by hospitals and according AMA, one in six worked for a hospital. For more details, click [here](#).

Medical clinics in retail settings are booming. Numbers of retail-based clinics are growing rapidly. In 2006, there were only 175 retail-based clinics. Today, there are 1,250 such clinics. For the full article, click [here](#).

Healthcare WiFi market to hit \$1.3B by 2016. According to ABI Research, WiFi enabled healthcare devices will continue its growth as the demands and use for mobile healthcare devices grow. For the full article, click [here](#). For a real world account of using WiFi enabled medical device, read this [blog](#).

Computer analysis could find new uses for existing drugs. For the NIH funded research, Stanford University analyzed drug and gene data to help discover new uses for drugs already on the market. Researchers identified possible drug-disease matches for 53 of the 100 disease analyzed. Repurposing existing drugs to treat different diseases could reduce costs and requirements involved in drug development process. For more information, click [here](#).

A KLAS report finds that business intelligence solutions are proving to be vital tools for medical groups aiming to become accountable care organizations. According to the [report](#), 60% of healthcare organizations believe that their BI technology can help them make the transition to an ACO model, and 64% of the providers plan to become ACOs in three years. For the full article, click [here](#).

Wellpoint to help IBM bring Watson technology to healthcare market. IBM and Wellpoint are teaming up to develop the first commercialized application using IBM's Watson technology. Watson is the computing system built by IBM to answer questions posed in natural language. Watson's ability to analyze 200 million pages of data in 3 seconds would allow healthcare providers with a quick and easy access to the most relevant medical findings across mountain of medical literature. For the full article, click [here](#).

SAP plans to offer EMR application for iPad. One of the largest software vendors SAP has announced it is developing an EMR app for hospitals. The company plans to make the app commercially available at the end of October and an Android version sometime next year. For more information, click [here](#).

Australia embarking on an ambitious project to create a nationwide EHR platform that will be controlled by the consumers. The two year, \$466.7 million project is designed to establish a registration based system that will allow patients to control what is stored in their health records, manage access and connect records across the nation's health systems. For more details, click [here](#).

Acquisition and consolidations continues. HP has reached a deal to [acquire](#) **Autonomy Corp.**, an information management technology provider with wealth of healthcare customers. Addition of Autonomy's technology points to HP moving more and more into healthcare information management and analytics. **Athenahealth** [announced](#) that it will acquire **Proxsys** for \$28 million to offer health information exchange service. **Wellpoint** has completed its [acquisition](#) of CareMore Health Group, a Cerritos, CA based company that offers Medicare Advantage plan and operates 26 clinics in Arizona, California and Nevada. Also, General Dynamics has [announced](#) its acquisition of Vangent, Inc., a provider of healthcare IT and business systems to federal agencies.

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Sincerely yours,

eRECORDS HITECH Advisors

About eRECORDS, Inc.

eRECORDS was founded with the vision to power innovations in healthcare delivery through connected technologies and intelligence. We support this vision through Health IT consulting services and our web-based product called Worry Free™ Dashboard. Worry Free™ Dashboard provides Meaningful Use administration, planning and performance management solutions to organizations including Regional Extension Centers, IPAs and medical groups.

Our Mission is to be the trusted expert, guide and partner in achieving meaningful use to make healthcare better, cheaper and measurable.

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