

Medicare E-prescribing Incentive Program January 1 – December 31, 2009

What is the Medicare E-prescribing Incentive Program?

The Medicare e-prescribing incentive is a new program authorized under the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA). The E-prescribing Incentive Program is currently based on one e-prescribing quality measure that was included in the 2008 Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI). Beginning in 2009, the e-prescribing quality measure will be removed from PQRI, and it will become the quality measure used in the E-prescribing Incentive Program. This means that a physician or other eligible professional could potentially get two incentive payments: one for being a “successful e-prescriber” for reporting the e-prescribing quality measure under the E-prescribing Incentive Program, and one for satisfactorily submitting data on other quality measures under PQRI. Specifications for the 2009 e-prescribing incentive measures are different from the 2008 PQRI program measures. The program begins January 1, 2009 and provides an opportunity for “successful e-prescribers” to earn a 2% bonus to be paid in 2010 on all 2009 Medicare pay. The program is expected to continue in 2010 with a 2% bonus, a 1% in 2011 and 2012 and a 0.5% bonus in 2013. Reductions in Medicare payment will begin in 2012 for those eligible professionals who choose not to participate (-1% reduction in 2012, -1.5% in 2013 and -2% in 2014 and subsequent years).

How Can I Successfully Participate in the E-prescribing Incentive Program?

For 2009, to be a “successful e-prescriber,” you must report the e-prescribing quality measure through your Medicare Part B claims on at least 50% of applicable cases during the reporting year. These include:

- new patient visits (CPT codes 99201-99205)
- established patient visits (CPT codes 99211-99215)
- consultations (CPT codes 99241-99245)
- other ophthalmology, psychiatry and psychology codes

To be eligible for the bonus, the services a doctor provided that can be linked to an e-prescribing measure must comprise at least 10% of his or her Medicare charges for the year.

E-prescribing Incentive Program participants must use a “qualified” e-prescribing system. A qualified system must be able to do the following:

1. Generate a complete medication list that incorporates data from pharmacies and benefit managers (if available)
2. Select medications, transmit prescriptions electronically using the applicable standards, and warn the prescriber of possible undesirable or unsafe situations

3. Provide information on lower-cost, therapeutically-appropriate alternatives (for 2009, tiered formulary information, if available, meets this requirement)
4. Provide information on formulary or tiered formulary medications, patient eligibility, and authorization requirements received electronically from the patient's drug plan

Starting with applicable services rendered on or after January 1, 2009, physicians must report the appropriate combination of CPT codes and special G-codes on Medicare claims.

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| Used a qualified e-prescribing system for all of the prescriptions | G8443 |
| Had a qualified e-prescribing system, but didn't generate any prescriptions during this encounter | G8445 |
| Had a qualified e-prescribing system, but prescribed narcotics or other controlled substances* | G8446 |
| Had a qualified e-prescribing system, and state or Federal law required you to phone in or print the prescriptions | G8446 |
| Had a qualified e-prescribing system, and the patient asked that you phone in or print the prescriptions | G8446 |
| Had a qualified e-prescribing system, and the pharmacy system can't receive electronic transmission | G8446 |

For more information about appropriate codes, refer to the CMS' Practical Guide to the E-prescribing Incentive Program available at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/downloads/11399.pdf>.

Additional Resources

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Practical Guide to the E-prescribing Incentive Program

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/downloads/11399.pdf>

Additional information about the e-prescribing incentive is also available at:

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI/03_EPrescribingIncentiveProgram.asp#TopOfPage

American Medical Association Tools

"Understanding the Basics of Medicare's Electronic Prescribing Incentive Program"

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/472/faq-cms-incentive-program.pdf>