

## **EHR Incentive Programs: What are the Differences between Stage 1 and Stage 2 of Meaningful Use?**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recently published the final rule for Stage 2 of the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs. The rule provides new criteria that eligible professionals (EPs), eligible hospitals, and critical access hospitals (CAHs) must meet to successfully participate in the EHR Incentive Programs.

### **Total Meaningful Use Measures**

Stage 1 established a core and menu structure for objectives that providers had to achieve in order to demonstrate meaningful use. Stage 2 retains this core and menu structure for meaningful use objectives.

In Stage 1, EPs have to meet 15 required core objectives, and 5 objectives from the list of 10 menu set objectives. In Stage 2, EPs will be required to meet 17 core objectives and 3 menu objectives that they select from a total list of 6, or a total of 20 core objectives.

In Stage 1, Eligible hospitals and CAHs have to meet 14 required core objectives, and 5 objectives chosen from a list of 10 menu set objectives. In Stage 2, they must meet 16 core objectives and 3 menu objectives that they select from a total list of 6, or a total of 19 core objectives in Stage 2.

### **Changes to Meaningful Use Objectives**

Most of the Stage 1 objectives are now core objectives under the Stage 2 criteria. For many of these Stage 2 objectives, the threshold that providers must meet for the objective has been raised. CMS expects that providers who reach Stage 2 in the EHR Incentive Programs will be able to demonstrate meaningful use of their Certified EHR Technology for an even larger portion of their patient populations.

Some new objectives were also introduced for Stage 2, and most of these were introduced as menu objectives. As with the Stage 1, many of the Stage 2 objectives have exclusions that allow providers to achieve meaningful use without having to meet objectives outside their normal scope of clinical practice.

Providers can visit the CMS website and download comparison tables of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 core and menu objectives and measures: [http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/Stage\\_2.html](http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/Stage_2.html).

For more information on the CMS EHR Incentive Programs, please visit <https://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/>.