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## NEWS BRIEF | 08.11.10

### CMS awards \$5.75 Million in Federal Matching Funds

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have added six more states plus the District of Columbia to the list of places receiving funding for state planning activities to aid implementation of the EHR incentive program under the ARRA.

The matching funds cover ninety percent of all planning activities, including:

- Analysis of the region to determine the level of health IT activity
- Overseeing Medicaid providers receipt of incentive payments
- Use of audits that ensure Medicaid providers receive the proper amount
- Promotion of interoperability and meaningful use of EHRs statewide and nationally

CMS will continue to encourage meaningful use and interoperability of EHRs nationwide to improve healthcare quality and efficiency for patients everywhere.

[Read the full story »](#)

### Disclosure of patient health information: Tiger team establishes 'meaningful choice'

When it comes to sharing the health information of a patient, there have been two primary methods: opt-in or opt-out. Opt-in requires that no information about the patient be exchanged unless the patient provides their consent. Opt-out on the other hand, assumes that the patient's health records may be shared until they decide to opt-out.

Recently, the tiger team has added a new dimension to the opt-out method that they refer to as 'meaningful choice'. Meaningful choice provides a patient with a reasonable opportunity to make an informed decision about whether or not they would like their health records shared. An example of this would be providing a patient with advance notice outside of the urgent need for care to consider whether or not they would like to give their consent.

Most direct exchanges of patient health records between two providers do not call for patient

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consent beyond what is required under HIPAA. However, in the event that patient consent is required, either an opt-in or opt-out method must be chosen. In order for physicians to use the opt-out method, all meaningful choice criteria must be met.

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## HHS seeks public comment on implementation of a "National Health Security Strategy"

The Health and Human Services department (HHS) has drafted a proposal, called the "Biennial Implementation Plan", for the use of IT to better handle the impact of disasters, pandemic outbreaks, and/or terrorist attacks.

The plan involves using technology, including EHRs, to assess the ability to deal with national tragedies and track public-health initiatives after one.

The HHS is requesting public comment, as well as new and inventive strategies on ways to carry out the plan in the current down economy.

[View the plan and/or submit comments »](#)

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