

Meaningful Use FAQs

What is an EHR?

An electronic health record (EHR)—sometimes called an electronic medical record (EMR)—allows healthcare providers to record patient information electronically instead of using paper records. However, EHRs are often capable of doing much more than just recording information. The EHR Incentive Program asks providers to use the capabilities of their EHRs to achieve benchmarks that can lead to improved patient care.

What kind of an EHR do you need?

To get an incentive payment, you must use an EHR that is **certified specifically for the EHR Incentive Programs**. EHRs certified or qualified for other CMS incentive programs may not be certified for this program. Also, if you already own an EHR, it may not be certified for use in the EHR Incentive Programs.

What do you have to do for Meaningful Use?

To show CMS that they are using their certified EHR in a meaningful way, providers must meet all of the Stage 1 requirements that CMS has established.

How does the program work?

The EHR Incentive Programs consist of 3 stages of Meaningful Use.

Each stage will have its own set of requirements to meet in order to demonstrate meaningful use.

We are currently in Stage 1. The requirements in Stage 1 are focused on providers capturing patient data and sharing that data either with the patient or with other health care professionals.

What are the requirements?

CMS has established **objectives** that all providers must meet in order to show that they are using their EHRs in ways that can positively affect the care of their patients - in other words, so that providers can demonstrate meaningful use.

Some of the **objectives** have a minimum percentage that providers have to meet. Other **objectives** specify an action that must be taken or a functionality of the EHR that must be enabled for the duration of the reporting period.

Eligible professionals have to meet the following measures in order to receive a meaningful use incentive payment:

- **15 Core Objectives** - These are objectives that everyone who participates in the program must meet. Some of the core objectives have exclusions that could exempt you from having to meet them, but many of them do not. You have to report on all 15 core objectives and meet the thresholds established by those objectives.

- **15 Menu Objectives** - You only have to report on 5 out of the 10 available menu objectives, including at least one public health-related objective. You can choose objectives that make sense for your workflow or practice. Again, some of these objectives have exclusions that could exempt you from having to meet them.

Under Stage 2, EPs will have to meet 17 core objectives and 3 out of 6 menu objectives.