

# Joint Statement on the 'Meaningful Use' Rule

Center for American Progress  
Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings  
Markle Foundation

**WASHINGTON, July 13, 2010**—The Markle Foundation, the Center for American Progress, and the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at Brookings today emphasized the importance of new federal rules on health information technology.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services today released regulations on implementing an incentive program for Meaningful Use of electronic health records (EHRs).

The program, authorized under the 2009 economic stimulus Recovery Act, represents the largest investment in modernizing health information technology in U.S. history.

"These regulations provide a promising foundation for encouraging the effective use of health information to improve patient care. With coming payment reforms, these incentives will give doctors and hospitals needed support for improving health care quality and efficiency," said Mark B. McClellan, MD, PhD, Director, Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform and Leonard D. Schaeffer Chair in Health Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution.

"The two words are critical together - 'meaningful' and 'use,'" said Carol Diamond, MD, MPH, managing director of the Markle Foundation. "The final rule has added flexibility to encourage providers to participate in the first phase of this critical effort to improve health, promote efficiency, drive innovation, and protect privacy. Now providers and patients can strive for meaningful use of modern information tools."

"This marks a new beginning in the effort to infuse the health sector with the power of information," said Peter Basch, MD, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

"In the long run, there is much more to be done to align quality and efficiency in care through health care and payment reform," Basch said. "But today, this incentive program provides a vital boost for doctors and hospitals to invest now in health IT and its optimal use for improving outcomes, coordinating care, and engaging their patients in health improvement."

For the past 18 months, the three organizations convened a broad collaboration of experts and organizations to advise HHS on the new rules, focusing on setting ambitious but achievable targets for the following priorities:

- Establishing goals and metrics in terms of improving health and efficiency, not mere purchase of technology.
- Embracing patient engagement as a key aspect of Meaningful Use.
- Adopting a phased approach to allow for technology development and testing at initial stages.
- Prioritizing requirements for reporting quality results to avoid unnecessary burdens on physicians and hospitals.
- Shaping technology requirements in a way that encourages innovation.

Details can be found at the following URL:

[http://www.markle.org/downloadable\\_assets/20100315\\_ehrincent\\_cms0033p.pdf](http://www.markle.org/downloadable_assets/20100315_ehrincent_cms0033p.pdf).

“We congratulate the many people who worked on the essential details to govern this program,” Markle, the Center for American Progress, and the Engelberg Center at Brookings said in a joint statement. “The requirements must be ambitious enough to make the investments worthwhile, but not so onerous that they discourage large numbers of doctors and hospitals from participating. We look forward to reviewing the final rule in detail.”

---