



September 17, 2009 - Topic: Federal Stimulus Funding

Interest in Health IT Is High, but Challenges Remain, Experts Say

Although the health IT field is receiving greater interest than ever before, several obstacles remain before the country can meet its goals for widespread adoption, experts said this week at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's annual conference, *Healthcare IT News* reports.

Tony Trenkle, director of CMS' Office of e-Health Standards and Services, said the federal economic stimulus package's health IT provisions aim to spur health IT adoption and build the foundation of a new U.S. health care system.

Trenkle said that although health care providers might face difficulty meeting the 2011 objectives for electronic health record adoption, these targets will "set the stage" for greater adoption down the road.

He added that CMS will need to develop a platform to encourage EHR expansion without creating disincentives or unintended outcomes.

Mark Spranca, a health IT specialist with Abt Associates, suggested that officials be flexible as they implement the health IT incentive provisions of the stimulus package.

By the end of this year, CMS plans to release a draft rule on the "meaningful use" of health IT. The agency plans to issue a final rule in early 2010 (Manos, *Healthcare IT News*, 9/16).

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