

**Initial EHR Certification Bodies Named**

Monday, August 30, 2010

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) today (August 30, 2010) named Certification Commission for Health Information Technology (CCHIT), Chicago, Ill. and the Drummond Group Inc. (DGI), Austin, Texas as the first technology review bodies authorized to test and certify electronic health record (EHR) systems for compliance with the standards and certification criteria that were issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services earlier this year. The announcement comes less than two months after issuance of final meaningful use rules.

Certification of EHRs is part of a broad initiative undertaken by Congress and President Obama under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, which was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. HITECH created new incentive payment programs to help health providers as they transition from paper-based medical records to EHRs. Incentive payments totaling as much as \$27 billion may be made under the program. Individual physicians and other eligible professionals can receive up to \$44,000 through Medicare and almost \$64,000 through Medicaid. Hospitals can receive millions.

To qualify for the incentive payments, providers must not only adopt, but also demonstrate meaningful use of, certified EHR systems. The law envisions that defined meaningful use requirements will help ensure that the patient and provider benefits of EHRs are realized. Initial meaningful use criteria were defined in a final rule issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on July 28.

In addition to the CMS rule, ONC also issued standards and certification criteria for EHRs on July 28, aimed at ensuring that EHR systems will support the specific tasks required under meaningful use. Also, through regulations issued on June 24, ONC created a system by which technology review organizations could also qualify as ONC-ATCBs that will certify EHR products as meeting the requirements necessary for meaningful use.

Announcement of these ONC-Authorized Testing and Certification Bodies (ONC-ATCBs) means that EHR vendors now can begin seeking certification of their products certified as meeting criteria to support meaningful use, a key step in the national initiative to encourage adoption and effective use of EHRs by America's health care providers. With the initial two ONC-ATCBs now named, EHR vendors can apply to them for certification of their products. By purchasing certified products, providers will have assurance that the products will support achievement of the meaningful use objectives.

Applications for additional ONC-ATCBs are also under review.

To learn more about the ONC-ATCBs named today visit www.cchit.org and www.drummondgroup.com.

For More Information or Assistance

If you need assistance responding to the EHR meaningful use, HITECH and other privacy, or other health industry regulatory, reimbursement or other operational or compliance concerns, please contact the author of this update, attorney Cynthia Marcotte Stamer. Ms. Stamer has extensive experience advising and assisting health care providers and other health industry clients with licensure, contracting, reimbursement, compliance, public policy, regulatory, staffing, and other operations and risk management matters. Ms. Stamer also regularly publishes and conducts training on these and other compliance, management and operations matters. You can contact Ms. Stamer to inquire about engaging her services or for information about training or other resources that she provides at (469) 767-8872 or via e-mail [here](mailto:stamer@stamercottelaw.com). To get more information about Ms. Stamer and her health industry experience, see [here](http://www.stamercottelaw.com).

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