



## NEWS RELEASE

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Date: July 14, 2010

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### HHS ANNOUNCES FINAL RULES TO SUPPORT MEANINGFUL USE OF ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

#### ***KANSAS FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL CARE, INC. DESIGNATED TO ADVISE KANSAS HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS ON MAKING ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS A REALITY***

Topeka, Kansas – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced final rules to help improve Americans' health, increase safety and reduce healthcare costs through expanded use of electronic health records (EHR).

Kansas Foundation for Medical Care Inc, (KFMC) is one of 60 Regional Extension Centers around the country, designated to offer healthcare providers a local resource for technical assistance, guidance, and information on best practices to support and accelerate healthcare provider efforts to become meaningful users of EHR.

“For years, health policy leaders on both sides of the aisle have urged adoption of electronic health records throughout our healthcare system to improve quality of care and ultimately lower costs,” Secretary Sebelius said. “Today, with the leadership of the President and the Congress, we are making that goal a reality.”

Established under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act of 2009, eligible healthcare professionals and hospitals can qualify for Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments when they adopt certified EHR technology and use it to achieve specified objectives. One of the two regulations announced today defines the “meaningful use” objectives that providers must meet to qualify for the incentive payments, and the other regulation identifies the technical capabilities required for certified EHR technology.

With “meaningful use” definitions in place, KFMC will be working with primary care providers and their practices to ensure that the EHR system they acquire will support achievement of “meaningful use” objectives. With today’s announcement, a concentrated five-year national initiative to adopt and use electronic records in healthcare can begin.

“Our Regional Extension Center provides the needed hands-on field support for all healthcare providers to advance the rapid adoption and use of health IT,” said Michael Aldridge, HITREC

Director. "In understanding the unique challenges facing today's healthcare provider, we fill the role of trusted advisor for providers in Kansas, offering a functional combination of national insight and local expertise." Aldridge added, "For qualifying primary care providers, our services are subsidized heavily through the ARRA funding, thus making our services extremely affordable."

Two companion final rules were announced today. One regulation, issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), defines the minimum requirements that providers must meet through their use of certified EHR technology in order to qualify for the payments. The other rule, issued by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), identifies the standards and certification criteria for the certification of EHR technology, so eligible professionals and hospitals may be assured that the systems they adopt are capable of performing the required functions.

"The release of final rules and minimum requirement definitions by ONC allows providers to move forward in preparation to achieve meaningful use by 2011," KAFP President, Jennifer Brull, MD, said. "The core criteria include reasonable goals for eligible providers and the menu set criteria allow greater flexibility in meeting the overall objectives. I anticipate that a large number of Kansas physicians will achieve meaningful use with the assistance of our HITREC."

The CMS rule announced today makes final a proposed rule issued on Jan, 13, 2010. The final rule includes modifications that address stakeholder concerns while retaining the intent and structure of the incentive programs. In particular, while the proposed rule called on eligible professionals to meet 25 requirements (23 for hospitals) in their use of EHRs, the final rules divides the requirements into a "core" group of requirements that must be met, plus an additional "menu" of procedures from which providers may choose. This "two track" approach ensures that the most basic elements of meaningful EHR use will be met by all providers qualifying for incentive payments, while at the same time allowing latitude in other areas to reflect providers' needs and their individual path to full EHR use.

"Healthcare is finally making the technology advances that other sectors of our economy began to undertake years ago," Dr. Blumenthal said. "These changes will be challenging for clinicians and hospitals, but the time has come to act. Adoption and meaningful use of EHRs will help providers deliver better and more effective care, and the benefits for patients and providers alike will grow rapidly over time."

## **About KFMC**

In our role as a Regional Extension Center, KFMC will support healthcare providers in our region with direct, individualized, and on-site technical assistance in:

- Selecting a certified EHR product that offers best value in the providers' needs
- Achieving effective implementation of a certified EHR product
- Enhancing clinical and administrative workflows to optimally leverage an EHR system's potential to improve quality and value of care, including patient experience as well as outcome of care
- Observing and complying with applicable legal, regulatory, professional and ethical requirements to protect the integrity, privacy and security of patients' health information
- Achieving Meaningful Use

Additional information may be obtained by visiting the KFMC website, [www.kfmc.org](http://www.kfmc.org), or by calling (800) 432-0770 and choosing the Regional Extension Center option, or e-mailing us at [recsupport@kfmc.org](mailto:recsupport@kfmc.org).

For additional information about the Health Information Technology Regional Extension Centers, see <http://HealthIT.hhs.gov/programs/REC/>.

## **Additional Resources**

A CMS/ONC fact sheet on the rules is available at <http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/>

Technical fact sheets on CMS's final rule are available at <http://www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/>

A technical fact sheet on ONC's standards and certification criteria final rule is available at <http://healthit.hhs.gov/standardsandcertification>.

The final rules are available at:

[http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2010-7207\\_PI.pdf](http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2010-7207_PI.pdf)

[http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2010-17210\\_PI.pdf](http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2010-17210_PI.pdf)

This material was prepared by Kansas Foundation for Medical Care, Inc. as part of our work as the Kansas Regional Extension Center, under grant #90RC00031/01 from the Office of the National Coordinator, Department of Health & Human Services.  
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