

# Money Flows From CMS to Physicians Engaged in Medicare EHR Incentive Program

## Kansas FP Receives \$18,000 Check

By [Sheri Porter](#)

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It's official. CMS is in the business of writing incentive payment checks to physicians as part of the agency's Medicare Electronic Health Record, or EHR, Incentive Program.

According to [information posted on the agency's website](#), April 18 marked the opening day of the meaningful use attestation process, and eligible professionals who have met all program requirements can expect to receive their 2011 incentive payments soon.



Sheri Porter/AAFP News Now

**Show Me the Money!** Smiles were the order of the day as Jennifer Brull, M.D., of Plainville, Kan., left, receives an \$18,000 check from CMS representative Lorelei Schieferdecker, who serves as a health insurance specialist for the agency.

Kansas AAFP President Jennifer Brull, M.D., of Plainville, Kan., was one of those who met the program requirements, and as a result, she received an \$18,000 bonus check from CMS on May 25. The agency recognized Brull as the first physician in Kansas to successfully attest to CMS' EHR meaningful use requirements and to meet all bonus eligibility rules for the program.

Brull operates a solo practice with a patient panel of about 8,000 in rural northwest Kansas. She told the audience that her road to meaningful use "started in 2005 when I said to my staff, 'We need an EHR.'"

In an interview before the check presentation, Brull told *AAFP News Now* that her practice went live with an EHR in 2008. "I have been actively working toward meaningful use since the criteria were published in July 2010," she said.

Brull said her achievement left her with a great sense of personal satisfaction, but she added that she was

driven by concern for her patients. "The best outcome was improving the quality of care provided to my patients." She called her meaningful use journey "challenging but not overwhelming," and she encouraged her physician colleagues to lean on their local regional extension centers for assistance.

CMS has some reminders about bonus payment specifics for other family physicians who may be receiving incentive program payments:

- bonus payments will not be made until the eligible professional meets the \$24,000 threshold in allowed Medicare charges;
- payments will be made approximately four to eight weeks after program requirements are met;
- participants will receive their Medicare bonus payment the same way they receive payments for Medicare services -- either by electronic funds transfer or by paper check;
- payments to Medicare providers will be made to the taxpayer identification number selected during registration for the incentive program; and
- CMS will deposit incentive payments in the first bank account on file, and the payment will appear on the bank statement as "EHR incentive payment."

CMS urges physicians to refrain from contacting Medicare administrative contractors, Medicare carriers or fiscal intermediaries regarding incentive payments because those entities are not responsible for payment.

Questions about EHR incentive payments should be directed to the agency's EHR information center at (888) 734-6433. The phone line is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. CDT, Monday through Friday, except for federal holidays.

The agency invites physicians who are not yet participating in the EHR incentive payment program to review a checklist of participation requirements via the ["Path to Payment" section](#) of the CMS website.