

*Whitepaper*

# Gearing up for Meaningful Use – A Public Health Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

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Adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHR) in Public Health is growing in today's healthcare market. Eligible professionals at Health Departments under the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Records Incentive Programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act can receive up to \$44,000 for Medicare, and up to \$64,000 for Medicaid when implementing a certified technology. ezEMRx's EHR technology is certified to support eligible professionals in their attestation for Meaningful Use. This includes Stage 1 & Stage 2 criteria and reporting requirements. This white paper identifies with the drivers of EHR adoption in Public Health, its challenges and successes.

## THREE IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR EHR ADOPTION

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### Federal government initiatives

Under the Health Information Technology Act (HITECH), incentive payments will be available to eligible professionals when they adopt EHRs and demonstrate use in ways that can improve quality, safety, and effectiveness of care. Eligible professionals can receive as much as \$44,000 over a five-year period through Medicare. For Medicaid, eligible professionals can receive as much as \$63,750 over six years. Eligible professionals attesting for Medicaid can receive their first year's incentive payment for just adopting, implementing, and upgrading certified EHR technology, but must demonstrate Meaningful Use in subsequent years in order to qualify for additional payments.

### Pay for performance

Healthcare is now evolving towards *pay for performance*, a change in thinking on reimbursement models. Commercial payers, Medicare, Medicaid, Accountable Care Organizations and Managed Care Organizations are beginning to qualify portions of reimbursement on measurable outcomes based on quality metrics of patient care.

### Improved Patient Care

Structured patient documentation with immediate availability of up-to-date records is now the norm of the industry. This ensures informed clinical decision-making, thus driving efficient patient care.

## THE ELIGIBILITY CONUNDRUM AT HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Health departments may be unsure if they qualify for Meaningful Use. In some cases, this leads to loss of available incentives that were achievable. How do you qualify or determine eligibility for Meaningful Use? First we need to understand the patient population. In most health departments, the majority of patients seen are Medicaid. That would lead to looking into the requirements for the Medicaid Incentive program. In order to achieve Meaningful Use under Medicaid, a health department must meet two primary requirements.

### ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONALS (EPs)

So, what's an EP? Eligible professionals under the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program include the following and a health department must have such staff members working at its facility:

- Physicians (primarily doctors of medicine and doctors of osteopathy)
- Nurse practitioner
- Certified nurse-midwife
- Dentist
- Physician assistant who furnishes services in a Federally Qualified Health Center or Rural Health Clinic that is led by a physician assistant.

### PATIENT POPULATION

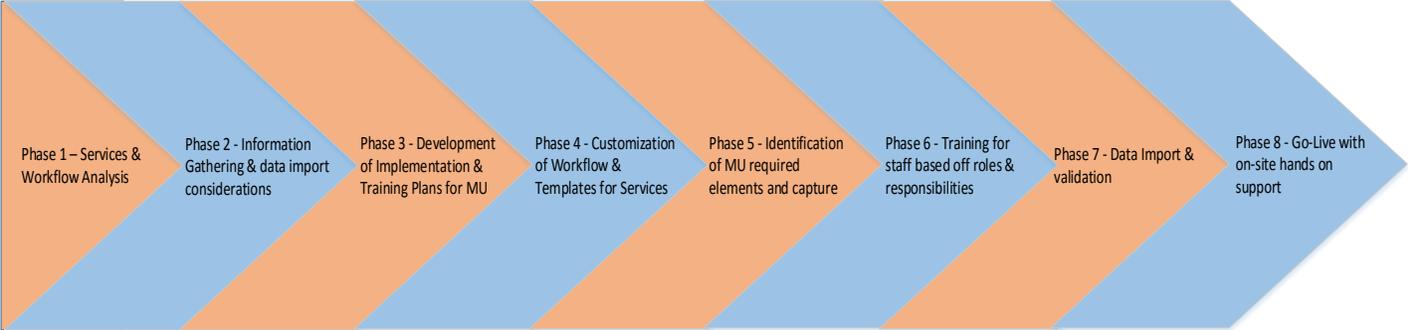
- Have a minimum 30% Medicaid patient volume\*
- Have a minimum 20% Medicaid patient volume, and is a pediatrician\*
- Practice predominantly in a Federally Qualified Health Center or Rural Health Center and have a minimum 30% patient volume attributable to needy individuals

\* Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) patients do not count toward the Medicaid patient volume criteria.

Health departments tend to have Nurses primarily on staff. These clinical professionals do not qualify as EPs, however, if the health department has a Physician or Nurse Practitioner, these providers do qualify.

# THE eZEMRx IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Medicaid Meaningful Use attestation for stage 1 requires the health department to provide volume numbers of the Medicaid patient population. This is considered the adoption of certified EHR technology by the health department. Attestation at this stage is generally accomplished by going over previous claims data for the year and ascertaining the patient volume as EHR data at this moment would be not present. The volume numbers are used in the attestation process to establish eligibility. The eZEMRx on boarding process can be described as follows.



## USING THE eZEMRx DASHBOARDS...

Unique dashboard tracks progress in meeting of the goals. Health department staff can tell how many patients are required to meet the objective and its goals at every stage.

Patient Volume	
Total number of patients in the practice	<b>2597</b>
Total number of patients seen in 2015	<b>127</b>
Total number of Medicaid patients in 2015	<b>18</b>
Total visits in selected range	<b>39</b>
Total Medicaid visits in range for practice	<b>13</b>
Total Medicaid visits in range for Primary MD	<b>12</b>

Criteria	Goal
<p>More than 80% OF ALL UNIQUE patients seen BY the EP have at least one entry OR an indication that no problems are known FOR the patient recorded AS structured data.</p>	<p>25%      80%</p> <p>You are here</p> <p>You need 2 patients to reach goal</p>
<p>More than 80% of all unique patients seen by the EP have at least one entry (or an indication that the patient is not currently prescribed any medication) recorded as structured data</p>	<p>75%      80%</p> <p>You are here</p>
<p>More than 80% of all unique patients seen by the EP have at least one entry (or an indication that the patient has no known medication allergies) recorded as structured data.</p>	<p>25%      80%</p> <p>You are here</p> <p>You need 2 patients to reach goal</p>

## OUR SUPPORT GUIDANCE TO HEALTH DEPARTMENTS...

- Registration Assistance – Assist health departments in getting CMS registration completed
- Ongoing Help – Exclusive hotline for Meaningful Use support when staff encounter challenges
- Reporting Oversight – Monitor progress of each measure in reaching the objective goals
- Attestation Assistance – Ensure the required numerator and denominator metrics are ready for attestation

## CONCLUSION

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ezEMRx custom workflows and templates for health departments have met the long-awaited era of electronic health records in Public Health. Making EHR software accessible to health departments, in a way that supports their documentation preferences, is now within reach. Meaningful Use is now a health department success story using the certified technology ezEMRx.

### CASE STUDY: Town of Cicero Health Department

*ezEMRx's EHR is uniquely designed for health departments. ezEMRx is widely used by clinicians across several specialties and public health clinics. Using ezEMRx, nurses in health departments can easily adapt to EHR usage with Meaningful Use workflows. ezEMRx's unique service-driven templates cater to areas such as Immunization, WIC, STD. ezEMRx certified EHR technology adapts a unique TAB based design to simplify the usability for health department staff. Over time, health departments complying with Meaningful Use are expected to see improved clinical outcomes and more robust clinical quality metrics providing essential data reporting on their populations.*

*The Town of Cicero Health Department embarked on working towards Meaningful Use with the adoption of ezEMRx's certified EHR technology.*

#### System Analysis

*The Town of Cicero Health Department was staffed with two nurses, five front office staff and one physician. The health department did not use any electronic method of capturing clinical information prior to ezEMRx. System analysis was performed to determine the clinic workflow and services being performed. The health department offered the following services - Immunizations, School Visits, City Restaurant Wellness Checks, Wellness Visits, Well Child Visits. Each service area was further analyzed for types of forms, questionnaires and documentation being recorded. These forms, questionnaires and documentation were then translated into templates, questionnaires and letters accordingly into the ezEMRx's certified EHR technology. Upon completion of the system analysis phase, a Go-Live date was established.*

#### Training Planning

*In accordance with the capture of requirements for Meaningful Use, elements within demographics such as race and ethnicity were set for mandatory capture during the check-in process. The current clinic workflow and newly created templates determined the layout of the tabs within ezEMRx's certified EHR technology, thus creating unique workspaces designed for the health department. In accordance to these elements (Meaningful Use, workflow, Templates), training plans and materials were designed. The training was scheduled over a period of one week with one-on-one sessions and group sessions on-site during off peak hours prior to the Go-Live date.*

(Contd.)

**CASE STUDY: Town of Cicero Health Department – Contd.**Training Onsite

*The clinical staff were broken into groups according to roles and responsibilities with Meaningful Use objectives.*

- 1. The front office staff were trained as a group on the capture of patient demographics along with the criteria as required of Meaningful Use.*
- 2. The nurses were initially trained as a group on the clinical aspects of the EHR. Meaningful Use requirements and criteria goals were explained accordingly. The clinical staff then were trained – “hands-on” on the EHR in one-on-one sessions using test patients.*
- 3. The physician was trained on all aspects of the EHR in several one-on-one sessions. This training entailed capture of details on test patients on the EHR. The different core objectives for phase one requirements of Meaningful Use were identified within each tab of the EHR during visit capture of a patient. In addition, the physician was guided into selection of five of the menu objectives and elective CQMs to fulfill all requirements of Meaningful Use.*

*The EHR environment was made available during the training phase to ensure a hands-on approach. All staff members from the health department (various roles) used the EHR to acclimate themselves with the new system and clinic workflow over a period of one week. Training support was established for the health department staff during this phase to ensure clarity of usage.*

Go-Live

*Users always face challenges when adopting a new system. It is of utmost importance that a supporting structure be established during Go-Lives. ezEMRx views this as a critical need for a successful implementation. Hence, during this phase, support staff were present on-site to ensure a smooth transition to ezEMRx's certified EHR technology. The Town of Cicero Health Department began working in November 2015, to utilize ezEMRx, the electronic health records system and certified technology. Soon after, it began work to attest for Stage 1 Meaningful Use under the Medicaid program.*

Attestation - Population Eligibility for Meaningful Use

*Tiffany Cole, from the Town of Cicero Health Department, sorted through past claims, thus ensuring the health department was able to meet the eligibility criteria of at least 30 percent—a Meaningful Use requirement.*

*(Contd.)*

**CASE STUDY: Town of Cicero Health Department – Contd.***In Conclusion*

*Sue Grazzini, director of the health department, says that “partnering with CDP and ezEMRx for Meaningful Use will make it much easier for us to report on these things in the future.”*

*The incentive money is helping the health department with the costs associated with implementing an electronic health records system.*

*Grazzini is optimistic that the new implementation of electronic health records and billing will streamline clinical processes and establish quality of care at the health department as she plans to begin attestation for the Meaningful Use incentive program coming up next year.*

**A Successful Attestation**

*Town of Cicero’s Health Department successfully attested for Stage 1 Meaningful Use under the Medicaid program and received their first payout of incentives (\$21,000).*

As health departments deploy EHRs, the key challenge they face is how nurses can quickly document services within the patient record, as part of the clinical workflow. ezEMRx's certified technology is developed for easy capture using a unique tab-based layout with guided public health templates. ezEMRx promises health department staff the ability to capture clinical services anywhere, with full traceability and reporting.

**ABOUT ezEMRx & CDP**

ezEMRx provides products and services in the ambulatory and public health settings. We focus on clinic requirements and feedback. Our strong business ethics guarantees our customers the confidence in longevity of our products and compliance to healthcare standards. ezEMRx is built on competitive knowledge and skilled expertise of people in the healthcare industry, such as clinicians in various specialties and health departments.

Since 1981, CDP has been a leading provider of comprehensive data management tools and platforms that assist Public Health reporting while improving data capture, data accuracy and financial management including:

- Certified EHR & Billing Solutions for Public Health
- WIC/ WIC EBT
- Environmental Health
- Data Warehousing

Together, CDP and ezEMRx have combined their resources, experience, and technical expertise to create and implement a true public health, hosted, electronic health record/practice management solution.