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Stimulus Dollars Everywhere-- What's the Catch for Healthcare?

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Incentive = \$\$\$\$\$

According to Potter (2009), approximately 17 billion dollars will be infused to stimulate the EHR adoption. Redman (2009) clarified that “The federal government plans to provide about \$1.2 billion in grants to help hospitals, physicians and other health care providers implement and use electronic health records” (¶ 1). Sherman (2009) stated that these “Grants will be funded by the American Recovery and reinvestment Act of 2009 and be made available in 2010” (¶ 7).

Stumbling Blocks = Many

- ◆ Hefty implementation costs in a depressed economy
- ◆ Large learning curve – time and resource intensive training to get everyone up to speed
- ◆ Maintaining HIPAA compliance in the midst of electronic revolving doors open for





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exchanging data and information

- ◆ Intra and inter-institutional interoperability issues
- ◆ Meeting an ambiguous standard that has yet to be clarified – “meaningful use”

Benefit = Savings

Cost savings are the buzz word and an “Estimated \$700 billion a year is wasted on unnecessary tests and mistakes that a computerized system could help avoid” (Goldman, 2009, ¶ 21).

2010 - 2014 Deadline Looming = The Stage has Been Set....

According to Goldman (2009), hospitals and physician offices must be able to prove that they use EHR in a “meaningful” way by October 2010 to become qualified for Medicare and Medicaid inducements through 2014. This is estimated at \$7 million per year per hospital on the average. The deadline looms as providers scramble to retain these incentives that will dwindle if they do not comply by 2015.

Current Status = A Wait & See Approach?

The US healthcare entities are all over the map as far as their capabilities to meet this new mandate. Many are waiting to get clarification for the ‘meaningful use’ wording and then they will decide their meaningful approach and use.





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2009-2010

The next year should prove to be an interesting mixed bag of exchanges – both monetary as well as ideas and innovations as our healthcare system responds. We will see our providers orbit the continuous cycle of the EHR mandate -- planning, analyzing, designing, implementing and maintaining – in an effort to improve patient care, receive funding, decrease costs and maintain incentives.

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