



ONCHIT Certification Update

By The Kelzon Group, LLC - Volume 1, Issue 10

CIOs finding “devil in the details” of MU

According to a senior CHIME official, “the road to meaningful use is proving more arduous than many had thought, as CIOs run into a number of nettlesome problems from IT staff shortages to quality measure snafus.” She says “CIOs are confronting two challenges. One is diving into the actual regulation and also diving into what they are specifically needing to do in their organizations . . . They are finding there are a lot of details they need to attend to. While they may have been doing some of the things that are in the (quality) measures already, like collecting vital signs, they may not have been collecting them in the right place for them to be reported properly. As people start to find these details out their confidence in obtaining meaningful use very quickly is beginning to wane.” The survey also found that “nearly 90% of respondents still have concerns related to meeting meaningful use requirements,” and “55% of CIO respondents say they still have lingering questions about the program, nearly six months after the Oct. 1, 2010, start of the stimulus funding program.”

As a best of breed, niche, or medical device vendor you could play an important role in helping CIOs through this arduous process. Even if you meet only a few of the general criteria, you may find that one you address is the one they are having trouble with. Keep your clients, particularly the CIOs office, informed about your ONCHIT certification. You can never tell when s/he may need you most!

Stage 2 +++ Coming Soon?

At the April 20 meeting of the standards group, it appears the MU Work group may be moving toward a phase-in approach that separates existing functionalities from new functionalities. In this model 2013 would be Stage2a, using existing certified EHR functions with all-core objectives, increased performance thresholds and new quality measures; 2014 would bring Stage 2b objectives requiring new EHR functionalities. “Dividing Stage 2 would raise the ante in terms of thresholds to qualify, while recognizing the implications of implementing new functionality,” said Paul Tang, Chairman.

Final Stage 2 MU recommendations will be presented for Policy Committee approval on June 8. Then soon after the April 20th meeting two new audit reports were issued questioning HHS' commitment to digital security in health information technology. The reports issued by HHS' Inspector General's Office, target both the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology and the Office for Civil Rights for failing to adequately protect patients' electronic information. In a 36-page “rollup” report citing audits at seven unnamed hospitals, the inspector general's office assails the Office for Civil Rights for a lack of rigor in enforcing the security provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The report also calls out the CMS, which previously oversaw digital security to strengthen security elements of MU.

When the HiTECH Standards Committee published its draft of Stage 2 criteria a few months ago there were very few if any changes to the P&S criteria. At this point, the only way they could make P&S criteria changes that address the criticisms of the Inspector General's Office is to create a Stage 2c. Remember when ONCHIT published its Final Rules last January it inserted a footnote on the Stages graphic that said in so many words - we don't know how many stages there will be and we reserve the right to create as many as we feel necessary!

Stage 1 - Your Comments Respectfully Requested

The HITSC Implementation Workgroup is collecting feedback on the progress of the EHR product certification program now that it has had certifying EHR technology on Stage 1 Meaningful Use criteria for almost a year. The intent is to get feedback on the process for establishing the ONC-ATCBs, for communicating the testing and certification criteria, and for testing and certifying EHR technology. Comments are open until June 17th. I have posted my comments and suggestions, particularly noting the ONCHIT MU bias against best of breed, niche and specialty vendors. [You can post your comments and read others comments at: http://bit.ly/ONCHITfp](http://bit.ly/ONCHITfp)



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