

## CONNEXIN'S COMMITMENT TO MEANINGFUL USE

The 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) brought many changes in how health information technology will be certified and funded during the upcoming decade. Chief among those changes was the provision of money that will assist Eligible Professionals (EPs) in acquiring and maintaining certified systems to manage Electronic Health Records (EHRs).

“Meaningful Use” is the key concept to qualify for ARRA funding. Put simply, providers must do more than just purchase qualified systems; they also need to show that they are using the systems meaningfully in order to improve patient care. Unfortunately, the implementation of this well-founded concept is anything but straightforward, especially for pediatricians. For Medicare providers, a uniform set of Meaningful Use guidelines has been developed by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. But for Medicaid providers - the category into which most pediatricians fall - individual state Medicaid Directors were given the authority to define Meaningful Use according to local requirements.

Although states are encouraged to use common benchmarks in their Meaningful Use definitions, they are under no obligation to do so. Early signs indicate that many states do intend to go their own way. This creates a unique challenge for EHR vendors which serve both adult medicine providers and pediatricians, because they face the daunting prospect of supporting possibly fifty different Meaningful Use definitions. Many pediatricians are concerned that this state of affairs will further marginalize EHR vendors' interest in their specialty, because Medicaid funding is smaller and harder to qualify for than Medicare funding.

As an EHR vendor that is fundamentally connected to pediatrics, Connexin is committed to ensuring its Office Practicum EHR meets both Medicare *and* Medicaid guidelines in all states where we serve qualifying providers. We intend to seek 2011 ARRA certification as soon as feasible after CMS names Authorized Testing and Certification Bodies. Once attained, this certification will cover our software at the same level as other ambulatory EHRs targeting adult medicine.

In addition, Connexin is taking actions above and beyond basic certification to allow its clients to qualify for Medicaid ARRA funding if they meet that program's visit thresholds. (More information about requirements to qualify for Medicaid ARRA funding is provided in a separate Meaningful Use FAQ.) Connexin has established a process for tracking state-level Meaningful Use definitions and will release periodic product enhancements to support them. This commitment to pediatric Meaningful Use exceeds other vendor “guarantees” that only cover the national definition, and is the minimum that pediatricians should insist on when purchasing a qualified EHR.