

Easing the Regulatory Burden of Electronic Health Records

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HHS Secretary Alex Azar recently announced efforts by HHS to reduce the regulatory burden on health care providers created by electronic health records systems (EHR). In December of 2016, Congress enacted the 21st Century Cures Act (the Act). Among the many initiatives included in the Act, Congress recognized the significant regulatory and administrative burdens related to the use of EHRs and other electronic health IT systems. In response, the Act emphasized the importance of reducing those burdens and specifically mandated that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) develop a strategy and provide recommendations to accomplish that goal.

In response to Congress's concern over the regulatory burden associated with EHRs, HHS released a draft *Strategy on Reducing Regulatory and Administrative Burden Relating to the Use of Health IT and EHRs* on November 28, 2018. The primary goal of this strategy is not only to reduce the burden on EHR end-users but also to improve the care delivery experience for all involved. Notably, HHS Secretary Alex Azar stated:

"Usable, interoperable health IT was one of the first elements of the vision I laid out earlier this year for transforming our health system into one that pays for value. With the significant growth in EHRs comes frustration caused, in many cases, by regulatory and administrative requirements stacked on top of one another. Addressing the challenge of health IT burden and making EHRs useful for patients and providers, as the solutions in this draft report aim to do, will help pave the way for value-based transformation."

Based on the input received by HHS, the draft strategy outlines three overarching goals designed to reduce clinician burden:

1. Reduce the effort and time required to record health information in EHRs for clinicians;
2. Reduce the effort and time required to meet regulatory reporting requirements for clinicians, hospitals, and health care organizations; and
3. Improve the functionality and intuitiveness (ease of use) of EHRs.

The public comment period on the draft *Strategy on Reducing Regulatory and Administrative Burden Relating to the Use of Health IT and EHRs* ends on Monday January 28, 2019 at 11:59:59 PM ET.

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