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# On Feb. 17, 2009, President Barack Obama

signed into law the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. The health IT component of the Bill is the HITECH Act, which appropriates \$19.5 billion to encourage physicians and healthcare organizations to adopt and effectively use information technology applications specifically designed for the practice of clinical medicine, including electronic health records (EHR), personal health records, health information exchange, computerized physician order entry, clinical decision support systems and electronic prescribing.

## *Incentives For You*

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Physicians who accept Medicare patients can receive \$44,000 over five years for adopting EHR and demonstrating meaningful use, such as e-prescribing, chart sharing and quality of care measurements. Each eligible physician can receive payments of \$18,000 in 2011, \$12,000 in 2012, \$8,000 in 2013, \$4,000 in 2014 and \$2,000 in 2015. Incentives are reduced for adoption after 2012.

Physicians who see more than 30 percent of patients paying with Medicaid (20 percent for pediatricians) will receive \$64,000 over five years.

Incentive payments and grants are already available to qualified providers who adopt technology now. By maximizing currently available ePrescribing initiatives and PQRI incentives, qualified providers can earn \$6,000 to \$8,000 prior to beginning the Stimulus incentive program.

Beginning in 2015, physicians who do not use EHR will be penalized, starting with a 1 percent Medicare fee reduction. Those who do not adopt an EHR after 2017 will face a 3 percent Medicare fee reduction.

## *How Ascend Can Help*

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We are a one-stop shop and can provide all the help, resources and support you need throughout the entire process of adopting an EHR.

All of our EHRs have ePrescribing capacity. All of our products meet current HHS standards.

Provider Blackberry and iPhone modules allow you to access patient data remotely and to transmit patient data to emergent and out-of-state providers.

## *Details of the HITECH Act*

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The HITECH Act will boost the percentage of physicians who adopt an EHR by 2019. This acceleration will boost net savings to the U.S. healthcare system by more than \$60 billion over eight years. This savings comes by diminishing the number of inappropriate tests and procedures, reducing paperwork and administrative overhead and decreasing the number of adverse events resulting from medical errors.

The majority of physicians are eligible for incentive payments if they meet the meaningful use threshold and have a patient base with more than 30 percent Medicaid patients. Physicians delivering all care in a hospital are not eligible.

Qualified EHR technology is certified to meet standards and includes patient demographic and clinical health information, such as medical history and problems lists. It also has the capacity to provide decision support and order entry, to capture and query healthcare quality information and to exchange electronic health information with other sources.