



# SENTINEL

A Publication of the Federation of Physicians & Dentists / AHPE  
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They say it's the "carrot-and-stick" approach, but are the incentives provided by the stimulus package to adopt EHR systems really the "cart-before-the-horse?" *From the desk of Lynda Odenkirk, Staff Feature Writer*

Part of the \$787 billion economic stimulus package that was signed by President Obama in February sets aside at least \$17 billion in incentive payments to physicians and hospitals that adopt electronic health records (EHRs).

But the eligibility requirements to receive these incentives and the fact that the incentives are only doled out *after* the doctor or hospital has invested in an EHR system may actually be disincentives to widespread adoption.

According to HITECH, the portion of the *American Recovery & Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) that has been dubbed the "Health Information Technology for Economic & Clinical Health" Act, only a "certified" EHR system will qualify for a bonus, but the law has yet to establish who will perform the certification. And the law still needs to flesh out the standards under which all vendors must operate.



Another issue at hand is that in order to receive the maximum \$44,000, you must qualify as an EHR user beginning in either 2011 or 2012. Anytime after that reduces your bonus period, with all payments ending after 2016.

And further, even if the EHR system is certified, physicians have to demonstrate "meaningful use" of the system in order to qualify for incentive payments. But what defines "meaningful use?" This, too, is yet to be determined.

[To read the rest of this article and to learn more, go to [FPD1199.org](http://FPD1199.org) and click on "Private Sector" then on "Grand Rounds."]

**Health reform on tap, but doctors must wait again** (by Jeffrey Young, TheHill.com, Posted: 05/04/09)

Congress may well enact a comprehensive health reform bill this year, but at this stage, it seems that lawmakers will put off fixing the mess created by the current Medicare physician payment formula, known as the sustainable growth rate (SGR), for another two years.

Since 2002, physicians have engaged in an annual lobbying fight to prevent actual cuts in Medicare fees, and for 2010, doctors face a 21% cut without legislative action.

[Go to [FPD1199.org](http://FPD1199.org) and click on "Private Sector" then on "Grand Rounds" to find a link to the rest of this article.]

## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

We have re-launched our website and have made it easier for you to go directly to your Division pages.

We realize that in this day and age, an up-to-date website is essential to the busy working professional. So we've given ourselves a facelift! We've also obtained additional domain names! So, in addition to going through our main FPD/AHPE web page at

[fpdunion.org](http://fpdunion.org)

you can NOW go directly to your Union Division pages at

[FPD1199.org](http://FPD1199.org)

Take full advantage of your membership - visit our new web site TODAY!



As a dues paying member, you can now purchase **Aflac™ Supplemental Insurance** policies at a special discounted rate! When you're out of work due to an illness or injury, there are two things that are increasingly hard to come by: piece of mind and cash. **Aflac™** provides both. Find out how by contacting our **Aflac™** agent, Mary Remson at [mary\\_remson@us.aflac.com](mailto:mary_remson@us.aflac.com).

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Union membership works for you everyday! Not only does membership get you an advantage at the bargaining table on the job, but off the job you and your family are automatically entitled to free benefits and special savings. **TAKE A LOOK!**

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**2** Are you struggling with debt? As a dues paying member, you have resources available to you that can help you manage your debt and take action. Simply go to [www.uniondebthelp.org](http://www.uniondebthelp.org) today.



**3** Act now if you are facing mortgage payment problems. Get free and confidential advice personalized for your situation. Or if you're a first-time homebuyer, it's never been easier and more affordable. Check out the "Money & Credit" section of [www.afscme.org/members/71.cfm](http://www.afscme.org/members/71.cfm).

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## EXCITING NEW BENEFIT FOR OUR PHYSICIAN MEMBERS!

The Federation has expanded its medical malpractice benefit package to include a partnership with **Physicians Risk Management Group (PRMG)** who has designed a comprehensive benefit program that can offer **substantial savings for our members**. **ALL Federation members who are in current standing qualify for this new cost-savings benefit.**

Over the past year we've been working with PRMG to incorporate many of the things that our members have suggested they would like to see in their medical malpractice benefit packages. As a result, in working with an underwriter who writes in all states that the Federation has membership, our members may be able to develop tailor-made, professional liability insurance programs for less than what they are paying now.

**Take a look at just some of the coverage details that FPD members can anticipate:**

- ◆ Choice of liability limits up to \$25,000,000 – occurrence or claims made
- ◆ **FREE** retirement tail coverage
- ◆ Roster policy feature (for large practice groups who need flexibility to accommodate staff changes, providing separate limits of liability and extended reporting coverage)
- ◆ Coverage for *Locum Tenens*, at no extra charge
- ◆ Alternative policy options, to customize policies that address both future and residual exposures

Not only is PRMG offering medical malpractice at greatly reduced rate, we've also arranged for discounts in workers' compensation, disability income, package insurance for your building and office, and **NOW - Employee Benefits!** Because PRMG works with medical professionals exclusively, you can be assured that you will receive excellent attention to your individual situation.

So, if you would like to find out what kind of savings in your malpractice premiums you may be eligible for, or if you want to see if they can arrange for discounts in other areas, such as small group or individual health insurance for your employees, you are encouraged to contact our agent at *Physicians Risk Management Group* today:

**BE SURE TO MENTION THAT YOU ARE A FEDERATION MEMBER!**

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