

Health Information Compliance Alert

Enforcement News: Are You Boggled Down By Paperwork? Relief Is on the Way

In response to a massive American Hospital Association (AHA) study on the administrative frustration of keeping up with the federal demands of required electronic health records (EHRs) and Meaningful Use initiatives, the U.S. Senate proposed legislation to alleviate the pressures of submission and compliance.

The EHR Regulatory Relief Act (S. 2059) introduced by Senators **John Thune** (South Dakota), **Lamar Alexander** (Tennessee), **Mike Enzi** (Wyoming), **Pat Roberts** (Kansas), **Richard Burr** (North Carolina), and **Bill Cassidy** (Louisiana) on Nov. 2, 2017 was proposed to "provide regulatory flexibility and hardship relief to hospitals and eligible professionals in the Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs," said an AHArelease.

"Health information technology, especially the advancements in electronic health records, is an integral part of the future of America's health care delivery system," said Thune in a Senate press release. "Our bill ensures that unnecessary regulatory burdens do not continue to negatively affect providers' ability to leverage technology to improve patient care. With such strong and continued support for this legislation, I'm hopeful it will lead to swift and meaningful action in the Senate."

The Act proposes to cut the reporting period from 365 days to 90 days for eligible clinicians and hospitals, the release suggests. In addition to a decreased reporting timeline, the group hopes to dismantle the "all-or-nothing approach to Meaningful Use," "reduce [the] volume of future EHR-related significant hardship requests," and allow greater "flexibility" for providers through 2019 in relation to requests for "hardship exceptions," the EHR Regulatory Relief Act fact sheet noted.

Reasoning: "As doctors, we best spend our time looking into a patient's eyes to make sure that she knows even though she has cancer, she has hope - not clicking on a computer screen to document something unimportant to her, but required by someone far removed from the exam room," said Cassidy.

Resources: To read the EHR Regulatory Relief Act summary, visit www.thune.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/347c2b2e-2c4b-40b4-9c99-1f7ec2c18b31/7906407E69B722993B6E2D37F9A91015.the-ehr-regulatory-relief-act-one-pager.pdf.

Look at the U.S. Senate press release on the legislation at: www.help.senate.gov/chair/newsroom/press/thune-senate-health-it-working-group-members-reintroduce-legislation-to-improve-meaningful-use-program.