Health Information Compliance Alert

Industry News: New Bill Promotes E-Records Benefits

The "Medicare for All" bill would help the some 46 million Americans currently without health insurance and at the same time provide incentives to providers for nationwide adoption of e-health records, reports Government Health IT.

Sen. **Edward Kennedy** (D-MA) and Rep. **John Dingell** (D-MI), leaders of the Senate and House health committees, proposed the bill on April 25. The bill calls for universal coverage of all Americans through Medicare and the Federal Employees Health Benefits program, reports Government Health IT.

Increased payroll taxes will fund the public or private plans chosen by the uninsured, and, according to Kennedy spokeswoman **Laura Capps**, coverage would be phased in over five years.

In addition to the proposed universal coverage, the Kennedy-Dingell bill would give incentives to health care providers who use electronic health records, although those incentives have not yet been identified.

The nationwide adoption of EHRs would drastically cut health-care costs by reducing administrative expenses, increasing preventive care and disease management, and extending pay-for-performance programs, reports Business Health IT.

In other news...

• Think the NPI numbers required in May will simplify providers' Medicare paperwork? Think again.

After the NPI implementation, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** will continue to issue and use Medicare/Medicaid Provider Numbers, CMS says in a recent memo to state survey agencies (S&C-07-16).

To decrease confusion between the new numbers, CMS will call the Medicare Provider Number the "Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Certification Number," or CCN.

HIPAA requires providers to use NPIs on all HIPAA-regulated transactions, such as claims, by May 23. But CMS will use the new CCN on all Survey and Certification and patient assessment transactions, the memo specifies.

"In some activities, both numbers will be used," CMS says. The memo is online at www.cms.hhs.gov/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/downloads/SCLetter07-16.pdf.

• A new federal bill would provide $4 billion in grants to help health care providers pay for information technology. Sens. **Debbie Stabenow** (D-MI) and **Olympia Snowe** (R-ME) introduced the Health Information Technology Act of 2007, which targets 20 percent of its money to rural areas.

Upcoming Conferences of Interest:

WEDI (Workgroup for Electronic Data Interchange) 2007 Fall Conference Mon, Nov 12 - Thurs, Nov 15, 2007
Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate - 1500 Masters Blvd
ChampionsGate, FL 33896

For more information, see: http://wedi.org/forms/meeting/MeetingFormPublic/view?id=2E5200000027.