

## Stage 3 Meaningful Use

On March 20th, CMS released a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for Meaningful Use Stage 3, which is the final stage in the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs.

In addition, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) has announced the proposed 2015 Edition Certification Criteria for health IT products. These NPRMs are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on March 30 and will be available online at this [link](#) for the Stage 3 NPRM and this [link](#) for the 2015 Edition Certification Criteria NPRM. A fact sheet for both proposed rules can be found [here](#).

Both proposed rules focus on the interoperability of data across systems and make the EHR Incentive Programs more flexible. CMS proposes flexibility for reporting by:

- Establishing a single, aligned reporting period for all providers based on the calendar year
- Aligning quality data for reporting via a single submission method for multiple CMS programs
- Simplifying meaningful use reporting requirements to eight objectives that focus on an advanced use of EHR technology and quality improvement

Rural eligible professionals, eligible hospitals, and critical access hospitals (CAHs) should take a close look at the changes made to the reporting periods, patient engagement thresholds, and reporting requirements, and how these changes may impact your participation in the program. CMS and ONC are accepting comments on the NPRMs 60 days after the publication date.

*Please note that Medicare incentive payments end in 2016 and Medicaid providers are not subject to payment adjustment.*