

Certification of Electronic Health Record Technology

In order to receive incentive payments through the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs, eligible providers must demonstrate that they are meaningful users of EHR technology certified by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). The ONC HIT Certification Program became operational on October 4, 2012 and helps ensure that EHR technologies purchased by providers have the necessary capabilities, functionalities, and security to help them achieve meaningful use.

How does the certification process work?

Once a developer or vendor creates an EHR product, it must be certified according to a specific process before providers may use it to meet meaningful use requirements. Each step of the process involves a distinct entity:

1. Testing of the EHR product conducted by Accredited Testing Laboratories (**ATLs**) using test tools and procedures approved by ONC;
2. Certification of the EHR product by ONC-Authorized Certification Bodies (**ONC-ACBs**);
3. Approval of the EHR product by ONC; and
4. Posting of the tested, certified, and approved EHR product to the Certified Health IT Product List (CHPL) by ONC. The CHPL is located at: <http://oncchpl.force.com/ehrcert?q=CHPL> and updated on a weekly basis.

Eligible providers may purchase and use products listed on the CHPL to meet meaningful use requirements. These products make it possible for patients and their providers to securely use and share accurate and complete health information to support patient-centered health care delivery.

Selection of testing and certification organizations

In order to perform their testing and certification functions, ATLs and ONC-ACBs must be accredited as follows:

- **ATLs:** accredited by the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program, administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).
- **ONC-ACBs:** accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and authorized by ONC to certify EHR products.

Testing and certification is conducted in accordance with standards and criteria adopted by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATLs test products according to one of two sets of EHR Certification Criteria. The 2011 Edition of the Certification Criteria establishes the minimum requirements that certified EHR technology must include to support the achievement of meaningful use Stage 1 objectives and measures. The 2014 Edition includes minimum requirements to meet Stage 2 objectives and measures as well as updates to Stage 1.

Certification requirements help ensure that EHR product possess certain capabilities and functions, such as:

- Record family health history
- Inpatient electronic prescribing
- Perform drug-allergy interaction tests
- Computerized Provider Order Entry
- Generate medication lists
- Transmit data to cancer registries

For more information about meaningful use, see <http://www.healthinfoLaw.org/federal-law/hitech>

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