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## Iowa Medicaid Providers First to Receive Incentives to Convert Records

**DES MOINES, Iowa** – Doctors and other Medicaid providers will be among the first in the nation next month to receive direct incentives for installing electronic health record systems in their offices, according to Medicaid Director Jennifer Vermeer.

Doctors, dentists, and other providers whose practice includes a high percentage of Medicaid patients can receive up to \$63,750 in federal funds over a six-year period to defray the cost of installing or updating electronic systems to replace traditional paper files. Hospitals are eligible for higher amounts.

“The benefits for the providers are obvious, but the most important reason for making this improvement is to provide more accurate and more efficient care for Medicaid members,” Vermeer said.

In addition to improved accuracy, the advanced systems also can be used to contact patients at home regarding medical or healthy lifestyle regimens. Other features could prevent the ordering of duplicate testing or the prescription of a drug that might cause an allergic reaction for a specific patient.

Iowa joins three other states – Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Kentucky – in being the first to take advantage of the program, which was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. About a year ago, Iowa was the first state to have its planning documents approved by federal officials.

Vermeer said Iowa Medicaid providers will receive incentives of at least \$120 million over the next six years.

Medicaid in Iowa is administered by the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise, a division of the Department of Human Services. About 380,000 Iowans – more than half of them children – are covered by Medicaid in Iowa.

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Iowa Editors: Two providers are available for comment on how the transformation to electronic records will improve results. They are:

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- Mikki Stier, Senior Vice President of Government and External Relations, Broadlawns Medical Center, Des Moines. Contact her at 515.282.2449.