



How Meaningful is Meaningful Use?

When it comes to understanding meaningful use, the ASA is a great source of information. They have been working with the government for months trying to get them to update the rules to make it easier to qualify for the incentives. They have even joined forces with the American College of Radiology and the College of American Pathologists who are suffering similar difficulties with interpreting the rule.

According to the ASA, most anesthesia professionals are deemed “eligible professionals” (professionals who are eligible to receive incentive payments and thus subject to future penalties), because they practice in multiple settings and will have greater than 10% of their overall anesthesia services billed using place of service codes 22 (outpatient hospital) or 24 (ambulatory surgery center). Being “eligible professionals” puts anesthesiologists at risk for payment penalties beginning in 2015 if they fail to meaningfully use a certified EHR system. If a practice had less than 10% of their services billed using place of service 22 or 24, they would become “hospital-based eligible professionals” and would not be subject to the incentives or penalties.

The real dilemma lies in the fact that most anesthesia groups fall into the “eligible professionals” group, but will find it very difficult (if not impossible) to meet the meaningful use requirements. This problem is rooted in the fact that the legislators and regulators did not anticipate anesthesiologists (and other specialties) falling into the eligible group. Anesthesia Information Management Systems (AIMS) are a different style of EHR that they did not consider, thus requirements for meaningful use that are applicable to other EHRs may not be applicable for AIMS.

The goal of the ASA is to have the Department of Health and Human Services rewrite the requirements so that anesthesia providers can know with confidence that if they purchase an AIMS that it will meet the meaningful use requirements. In the meantime, we are all left wondering what to do before the meaningful use requirements go into effect in 2016.

MedNet America stands by our clients and the ASA on this issue.

Source: www.asahq.org