Health Informatics on FHIR
Federal Programs: Incentive Payments
Mark L Braunstein, MD
School of Interactive Computing
Georgia Institute of Technology

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In this lesson we discuss the third key component of the federal programs
to encourage adoption of informatics and
I suppose to providers maybe the most important component: the incentive
payments they can earn if they achieve meaningful use.
There are actually two incentive payments systems.
One funnels the money to providers through Medicare.
And the amount they can earn is based on the amount of Medicare patients they see.

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The other is for providers who have a certain minimum level or
above of Medicaid patients.
Medicare is the U.S. federal program that pays for
the care of citizens once they are 65 years are older.
Medicaid pays for the care of poor or disabled citizens,
and there are a few other, smaller groups included as well.
A key difference between these two incentive payment programs
Is under the Medicare there is both the carrot of payments and
the stick of reduced payments if providers don't achieve meaningful use.

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Medicaid doesn't have any penalty, largely because the providers who care for
Medicaid patients are already among the poorest paid providers,
then are seeing patients in some of the poorest and
most medically under-served areas of the country.

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Finally, each provider can participate in only one of these two programs.
Like any federal program, the incentive payments are somewhat complex.
This diagram illustrates a few key points that the earlier
a provider adopts electronic records, the more money they can potentially earn.
You can see that the total amount a provider can potentially earn drops off
as their year of adoption moves out into the future.
It also shows that there are penalties for
providers who have not achieved meaningful use by certain dates.
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