

Fact Sheet

VistA–Office EHR

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs are collaborating to transfer VistA, the VHA's Electronic Healthcare Record (EHR) technology, to the private physician office setting. The VistA-Office EHR project combines the strengths of both agencies to result in the availability of a high-quality, public domain EHR system. The VHA and CMS have invited other interested government agencies to participate in the VistA-Office EHR project.

CMS and VHA are helping to stimulate adoption of electronic health records. They encourage the use of private sector vendor EHRs that are affordable, high quality, interoperable and standards-based. Together, they are providing VistA-Office EHR, a high-quality public-domain solution to supplement EHRs available from private vendors.

Targeted for release July 2005, the VistA-Office EHR system will be available to individual practices and the EHR industry. VistA-Office EHR offers healthcare providers an improved ability to care for patients with chronic diseases. This effort includes existing VistA functionality and will provide modifications to add:

- Support for disease management in areas such as hypertension, coronary artery disease, and diabetes. This will include reporting clinical data to a CMS-sponsored clinical data warehouse for quality improvement purposes
- Enhance the registration process to meet the needs of the general population
- Enhance the functionality for OB, GYN and Pediatrics care
- Interface with practice management and billing systems
- Improve installation procedures.

The VHA is a recognized leader in EHR Technology. The VistA system is in use by 170 VA Hospitals that have collaborative relationships with 110 of the nation's 117 medical schools. The VistA system is used by more than 1,300 VA facilities to maintain the records of over 5 million veterans. The VHA employs 14,200 physicians, 36,000 registered nurses, and 4,700 pharmacists. Currently, the VistA system is in use outside of the VHA by the Washington, DC Department of Health; American Samoa; and forms the core system for the Indian Health Services (RPMS) system.

CMS is a recognized leader in healthcare quality improvement and, through its Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs), has extensive experience in nursing home and hospital-based programs. CMS has recently started the Doctors Office Quality Information Technology (DOQ-IT) project to increase the rate of implementation and optimize the use of EHR technology in the outpatient physician office setting. By

optimizing preventive outpatient services, DOQ-IT will help the QIOs to assist physicians in improving the health of individual patients and result in reduced utilization of expensive services by the Medicare beneficiary population.