



MAR 12 2015

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to request your review and comment on the Indian Health Service (IHS) Multi-Purpose Agreement (MPA). This document is necessary for Tribal and Urban Indian use of the Meaningful Use Stage 2 Certified IHS Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) Electronic Health Record (EHR).

Tribal and Urban Indian health care sites using the IHS RPMS EHR will soon have access to a significantly expanded set of enhancements that will enable Federal, Tribal, and Urban health programs to work cooperatively to improve the quality of patient care. These new enhancements include the Master Patient Index (MPI), Health Information Exchange (HIE), Patient Health Record (PHR) portal, RPMS DIRECT Messaging, and access to Healthway's national eHealth Exchange. Given the focus on enhanced data sharing capabilities, IHS is collectively referring to these enhancements as the RPMS Network.

In order to use the enhanced capabilities of the RPMS Network, Tribal and Urban Indian health programs will need to sign a MPA and agree to its terms to access the RPMS Network. The MPA is designed to establish binding standards for accessing and sharing patient data. The agreement requires participating organizations to abide by a common set of terms and conditions in order to create a framework of trust between all organizational participants to support the privacy, confidentiality, and security of the health data being exchanged on our patients' behalf. The MPA will also help us to maintain compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy, Security, and Breach rules and other applicable laws and Federal regulations.

The RPMS Network offers new features that will improve access to essential health information at the point of patient care and will provide new options for promoting health communications for patients and health care providers. These tools address the requirements established by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) detailed in the 2014 Certified EHR rules that enable eligible health care providers and hospitals to achieve Meaningful Use (MU) in Stage 2. The RPMS Network enables access by health care providers to patient health information through the HIE for permitted purposes, allows patients to access to their own RPMS data through the PHR, and also supports the ability for patients to send secure and encrypted emails to their health care team using the RPMS DIRECT e-mail system. These tools can improve the quality of patient care and increase patient satisfaction.

Accessing the RPMS Network is optional. If your site decides against using the new functionality, it will not affect your existing RPMS/EHR interface. However, the RPMS Network sets of enhancements are components of MU and can contribute to the ability of eligible providers and hospitals to receive EHR MU Incentive Payments.

The IHS Office of Information Technology (OIT) will be providing an informational session that will provide an overview of the MPA and respond to questions. The date of this session will be announced on the IHS Meaningful Use Web site at: <http://www.ihs.gov/meaningfuluse/> after April 1, 2015. Registration will not be required.

A draft copy of the MPA and a joinder agreement can also be accessed online on the IHS Meaningful Use Web site listed above. Please share this notice with your health care administrators, health information technology leadership, and others, as appropriate. Your comments may be submitted to CDR Mark Rives, Chief Information Officer (CIO), IHS, by e-mail at consultation@ihs.gov.

The IHS is committed to meaningful consultation with Tribal organizations and Urban Indian programs as we advance health information technology in Indian Country. I look forward to your views, comments, and working with you to bring change and improvement to the IHS.

Sincerely,

/Robert G. McSwain/

Robert G. McSwain
Acting Director

Enclosures: "*Joinder Agreement*"
"*IHS Master Patient Index, Health Information Exchange, Personal Health Record,
and RPMS Direct Multi-Purpose Agreement*"