

Special to RIMS Members

Tuesday, October 26, 2011

Nov. 1: Last call for e-prescribing exemptions before Medicare penalties hit on January 1

Rhode Island physicians who prescribe for Medicare patients should by now either be well-established electronic prescribers, or they should have secured an exemption. Medicare's multi-year program for promoting electronic prescribing is now in its third year, and the federal incentives are now about to shift from positive to negative. This means that physicians who do not prescribe electronically for Medicare patients and do not have an exemption will see their Medicare payments reduced by 1% starting January 1, 2012.

This week, Medicare and its contractors are taking the unusual step of using U.S. mail and telephone calls to reach out to physicians who appear to be in danger of incurring the penalty and advise them to seek an exemption, if they qualify.

The following link connects directly with the exemption request page on the Medicare website:

www.qualitynet.org/portal/server.pt/community/communications_support_system/234

Physicians should not wait to be contacted by Medicare. Any physician who may be unsure whether he or she participated successfully in Medicare's e-prescribing incentive program to date should review the attached fact sheet and, if eligible, apply for an exemption before November 1.

Physicians making application should be sure to include all of the exemption categories that may apply to their particular situations. There is no appeal process if the exemption is denied.