

E-Rx Hardship Deadline Extended

If you missed the opportunity earlier this year to claim an e-prescribing exemption to prevent a 1.5- percent penalty in 2013 on all Medicare allowable charges, you now have a second chance. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) it would accept new hardship exemption requests for three months so you can claim one of the four hardship exemptions. They are:

1. You cannot electronically prescribe due to local, state, or federal law or regulation (e.g., you prescribe controlled substances).
2. You infrequently prescribe (e.g., fewer than 100 prescriptions between Jan. 1 and June 30).
3. Your practice is in a rural area without high-speed Internet access.
4. Your practice is in an area without sufficient available pharmacies for electronic prescribing.

To claim the exemption, log on to Medicare's [Quality Reporting Communication Support](#) web page to access the exemption form between Nov. 1 and Jan. 31, 2013.

There are two more *proposed* exemptions currently awaiting final rule in the 2013 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule:

- Physicians who achieved meaningful use during certain e-prescribing adjustment reporting periods ;
- Physicians who demonstrate intent to participate in the EHR Incentive Program and adoption of Certified EHR technology.

TMA will announce if these additional exemptions are available when the information becomes available.

Remember, you are automatically excluded from the 2013 penalty if:

- You submitted at least 25 e-prescriptions in 2011 and reported such with G-code, G8553.
- You submitted fewer than 100 denominator-eligible* claims to Medicare in 2012; or
- Less than 10 percent of your allowed charges between Jan. 1, 2012, and June 30, 2012, consist of denominator eligible codes.*

There is still time to earn a 1 percent bonus on 2012 Medicare Allowable Charges by e-prescribing 25 times and reporting G-Code, **G8553** on encounters taking place by December 31, 2012. (See *TMA's 2012 e-prescribing informational paper*.)

If you need help with e-prescribing, turn to the Texas regional extension centers (RECs). RECs provide support to physicians to help with e-prescribing, EHR selection, workflow analysis, staff training, EHR incentives, and much more. Visit [TMA's Texas REC Resource Center](#) for more information.

Questions regarding the e-prescribing program may be directed to TMA's Department of Health Information Technology by calling (800) 880-5720 or emailing HIT@texmed.org.

Article also linked here: <http://www.texmed.org/Template.aspx?id=25810>