Lt. Governor Brown, DHMH Announce $2 Million Issued to Health Providers to Encourage Use of Electronic Health Records"

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (January 5, 2011) – On December 31, 2011, Maryland's Medicaid program processed its first payments to Maryland medical providers and hospitals through the federal Medicaid Electronic Health Records (EHR) Incentive Program, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) announced today.More than $2 million has been issued to the first group of eligible providers and hospitals through the program, which is funded by federal dollars through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

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the right patient at the right time in order to improve care and reduce costs for all Marylanders," said Lt. Governor Brown, co-chair of the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council. "Through our innovative initiatives and partnerships, Maryland has become one of the leading states in the use of electronic health records, and these funds represent another major step forward in our efforts to make Maryland the healthiest state in the nation. I would like to thank Maryland's Congressional Delegation, our federal partners, and all who have helped make this program a reality."Physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, dentists, or physician assistants (who furnish services in a Federally Qualified Health Center that is led by a physician assistant) who participate in Medicaid and meet specified Medicaid patient volume thresholds are eligible for the program.

Hospitals that are acute-care facilities with at least 10 percent Medicaid patient volume, as well as children's hospitals, are also eligible to receive funds under the program. So far, 449 providers and hospitals have applied for funds through the program. "Widespread use by providers and hospitals of electronic health records is a critical component of Maryland's strategy for improving health outcomes, " said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. "Patients across Maryland will benefit from improved care as a result of the expanded use of these critical tools."The program runs through 2021, with any provider eligible to participate for up to six (consecutive or inconsecutive) years. The bulk of the payment is made in the first year of participation, and is triggered by the adoption, implementation or upgrading of certified EHR technology. For the first year, a provider will receive up to $21, 500. In each additional year of participation, the provider would earn $8, 500 if he/she meets the "meaningful use" requirements established by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).Eligible hospitals would receive a $2 million base incentive, plus additional amounts reflecting

Medicaid inpatient bed-days and other factors. Hospital incentive payments are calculated when the hospital registers to participate, and would be disbursed over four years.

"As we are already seeing, the incentive program gives providers the motivation to improve their own technology, helping to build the state's health information network, and rewards those providers who have already done so, " said Charles J. Milligan, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing. "We are pleased that the O'Malley/Brown Administration has the incentive program up and running, allowing providers across Maryland to access federal Medicaid incentive dollars to support their adoption of electronic health records technology, " said Gene Ransom, CEO of MedChi. "This is a big step that will help maintain Maryland's position as a leader on Health Information Technology issues — critical to improving patient care and reducing costs."Once a provider has registered, their eligibility must be reviewed by CMS. DHMH anticipates that the program will make nearly $50 million in incentive payments to eligible providers and hospitals by the end of the Fiscal Year in September 2012, and that the amount will increase as more providers and hospitals enter the program.For more information, visit http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/mma/ehr/index.html. Providers can go to https://ehrincentives.cms.gov/hitech/login.action to register for the incentive. For questions, email MarylandEHR@dhmh.state.md.us.As Co-Chair of the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council and Chair of Maryland's Health Quality and Cost Council, Lt. Governor Brown leads the O'Malley-Brown Administration's health care portfolio. Under the leadership of Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown, Maryland has implemented reforms that have already expanded health coverage to over 300, 000 Marylanders. According to research by the independent Hilltop Institute, implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will save Maryland an estimated $850 million and cut the number of Marylanders without health insurance in half by 2020