In the 2011 program year, CMS paid a total of $261,733,236 in PQRS incentive payments. In addition, 282,382 eligible professionals participated in the 2011 eRx Incentive Program, receiving $285,049,103 in incentive payments for 2011.\(^1\)

Daniel Green, MD FACOG, Division of Ambulatory Care, CMS Quality Measurement & Health Assessment Group (QMHAG), recently fielded several questions from providers about the 2015 PQRS penalty.\(^2\)

**Q:** Are we correct in understanding that an Eligible Professional (EP) can submit one single claim on one measure and avoid the penalty?

**A:** Yes, an eligible professional could avoid the 2015 payment adjustment by correctly appending at least one quality data code for at least one measure on a claim. However, the claim must be for a patient or service that is part of a PQRS measure’s denominator and the quality data code that is appended to the claim must be a valid numerator code for that particular measure.

**Q:** If so, why would an EP pursue the more intensive process of reporting through administrative claims to avoid?

**A:** CMS has generally offered several options to allow eligible professionals choices in reporting, and continues to do so. An EP or group practice may find that electing the administrative claims option is more attractive than reporting quality data codes on their claims.

**Q:** Another question is really about having the safety net. If an EP attempts to submit via data submission vendor, but wants to make sure that they avoid the penalty in case of a failure, could they just submit the single claim as well as try for the incentive through DSV?

**A:** Yes, they could do that. They could always report 1 measure through claims or some other acceptable option and still try the DSV.

**Q:** Also, if someone elected to do the administrative claim as a safeguard, but they also successfully participate for the incentive, will CMS disregard the request for the administrative claim and distribute the incentive payment?

**A:** Yes, they will receive the incentive.

For questions or inquiries on PQRS reporting requirements contact the QualityNet Helpdesk at 866-288-8912 (TTY 877-715-6222) or qnetsupport@sdps.org

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