

Management Service Organization

State Designation

Background

Management service organizations (MSOs) have emerged as a way to address the challenges associated with provider adoption of electronic health records (EHRs). These challenges include the cost and maintenance required for the technology, and the responsibilities that accompany the storage of electronic data privacy and security. Unlike the traditional EHR client-server model where the data and technology is hosted locally at the provider site, MSOs offer EHRs hosted in a centralized secure data center. Data is safeguarded through a network operating center that, by design, ensures high quality and uninterrupted service. MSOs enable physicians to access a patient's record wherever access to the Internet exists. These remotely hosted EHRs enable providers to focus on practicing medicine rather than dedicating staff to support the application.

On May 19, 2009, Governor Martin O'Malley signed into law House Bill 706, *Electronic Health Records – Regulation and Reimbursement*. This law requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to designate one or more MSOs that will offer EHRs throughout the state by October 2012. The MHCC convened an MSO Advisory Panel to develop the criteria for MSOs that seek *State Designation*. The MHCC will utilize established criteria administered by a nationally recognized accrediting organization.

Program Overview

- MSOs must offer at least one hosted EHR solution and connect to the state designated health information exchange.
- The MHCC will evaluate applications for *State Designation* and issue a formal disposition letter within approximately two weeks of receiving a completed application for *Candidacy Status*.
- An MSO will be considered in *Candidacy Status* based upon the issuance of a disposition letter that acknowledges that the MSO has met the initial documentation requirements for application.
- An MSO in *Candidacy Status* has one year from the date of the disposition letter to successfully complete the requirements for *State Designation*.
- MSOs in *Candidacy Status* are afforded the same recognition as MSOs with a *State Designation*.
- To be considered for *State Designation*, an MSO must complete a self-assessment evaluation consistent with the established criteria and undergo a site review of their network operating center(s).
- The MHCC will rely on the evaluation of a nationally recognized accrediting organization in determining whether an MSO meets the *State Designation* requirements.
- *State Designation* is awarded by the MHCC to MSOs that receive a minimum score of 85 percent on their self-assessment manuscript and a similar score on their network operating center site review.
- *State Designation* is valid for two years; MSOs interested in reapplying must initiate the application process at least 90 days before the *State Designation* is scheduled to lapse, and submit the self-assessment manuscript and undergo a site audit no later than 90 days from the *State Designation* expiration date.
- MSOs with a *State Designation* are required to provide assistance to providers in such areas as EHR planning, implementation, education, technical support, and in becoming advanced users of EHRs.
- MSOs with a *State Designation* are required to meet all the performance requirements established by the Regional Extension Center.