Last week, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP), called for HHS to delay the regulations implementing Stage 3 of the Electronic Health Records (EHR) incentive programs until January 1, 2017.

In March, HHS proposed rules that set forth objectives for professionals and hospitals to meet in order to achieve Stage 3 meaningful use. The Stage 3 proposed rules specify a full year reporting period, instead of a 90-day reporting period, for most professionals and hospitals. As with many EHR requirements, these proposed rules were met with considerable resistance from the provider community.

In calling for delay of the Stage 3 requirements, Senator Alexander cited challenges providers have implementing the new EHR technology: “Some hospitals have told me they are ‘terrified’ by the prospect of stage three. It does not help patients to makes these massive changes fast and wrong. It does help patients to do this deliberately and correctly so that hospitals and doctors embrace the changes instead of dread them.”

Senator Alexander’s concern about the EHR programs is not new. Earlier this year, Senator Alexander announced the formation of a HELP Committee EHR Working Group “to help make the failed promise of electronic health records something that physicians and providers look forward to instead of something they endure.”

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