

penetration of qualified EHRs necessary to support the ambitious goals of the Stage 3 criteria of meaningful use. Given the anticipated maturity of HIT infrastructure inherent in the strengthening criteria and the increased adoption of certified EHR technology predicted in section V. of this proposed rule, these barriers to meeting the Stage 3 criteria of meaningful use will be removed.

Table 1 outlines our proposal to apply the respective criteria of meaningful use for each payment year (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) for EPs and eligible hospitals that become meaningful EHR users before 2015. Please note that nothing in this discussion limits us to proposed changes to meaningful use beyond Stage 3 through future rulemaking.

TABLE 1: Stage of Meaningful Use Criteria by Payment Year

First Payment Year	Payment Year				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015+**
2011	Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 2	Stage 3
2012		Stage 1	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
2013			Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
2014				Stage 1	Stage 3
2015+*					Stage 3

* Avoids payment adjustments only for EPs in the Medicare EHR Incentive Program.

** Stage 3 criteria of meaningful use or a subsequent update to the criteria if one is established through rulemaking.

Please note that the number of payment years available and the last payment year that can be the first payment year for an EP or eligible hospital varies between the EHR incentive programs. The applicable payment years for each program are discussed in section II.B. of this proposed rule for the Medicare FFS EHR incentive program, in section II.D. for the MA EHR incentive program, and in section II.E. for the Medicaid EHR incentive program.

The stages of criteria of meaningful use and how they are demonstrated are described further in this proposed rule and will be updated in subsequent proposed rules