Physicians and patients could soon have access to tools that will help simplify complicated components of health care, including Medicare payment policies and medical bills. Learn about two new health IT challenges and funding opportunities that should bring greater clarity and simplicity to important administrative functions, from medication management to care coordination.

Making sense of regulations and medical bills

“It’s not just a vision for our future,” said U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Sylvia Burwell as she announced two new challenges at Health Datapalooza in Washington, D.C. “These changes are happening right now. We are getting closer to that better, smarter health care system every day.”

The two challenges from HHS focus on clarity for both physicians and patients:

- **MIPS Mobile Challenge.** The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) proposed rule is complicated, and many physicians are wondering how to make sense of it all. In an effort to help physicians understand the rule when it is finalized this fall, HHS has announced a new challenge to help physicians navigate the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). The MIPS Mobile Challenge will focus on solving the problem that many physicians and their staff will face—the ability to easily access information that is relevant to improve patient care and enable successful reporting under the new payment system. The winning idea will create a mobile platform that features innovative ways of transmitting educational materials or facilitating collaboration among users.

- **A Bill You Can Understand Challenge.** Medical bills can be difficult to understand, often feeling like a foreign language to patients. HHS recently announced a new challenge that seeks design solutions that result in clearer, less complex and more understandable medical bills that improve the patient financial experience.
Technology that advances patient care

National Coordinator for Health IT Karen DeSalvo, MD, announced two new funding opportunities intended to boost implementation of standards and technology that can improve care delivery, health information exchange and the patient experience.

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT is asking applicants to select focus areas from a list of categories, including comprehensive medication management, laboratory data exchange and care coordination.

Each program differs in award amount and category selection:

- **High Impact Pilots (HIP) program.** Applicants select one priority category and a minimum of three impact dimensions that their project will address. Total funding available is $1.25 million. Learn more about the HIP program.

- **Standards Exploration Award (SEA) program.** Applicants select one priority category and one specific impact dimension that their project will address. Total funding available is $250,000. Learn more about the SEA program.

“We all need to move toward common standards,” Dr. DeSalvo said. “We have to move toward culture change—one in which access to health information is the norm, including addressing information blocking, and we have to build an appropriate business case for interoperability.”