



# ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

## AT A GLANCE

### UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **CMS Web Interface Quality Reporting: March 31, 2021**

### ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- **NOIA and Application Cycle Dates Available for a January 1, 2022 Start Date**
- **CMS to Apply MIPS EUC Policy for the 2020 Performance Period in Response to COVID-19, Reopen Application**
- **ACO-MS Login Functionality**
- **BOSC Customer Satisfaction Survey**

### EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **CMS Web Interface Biweekly Support Calls**

March 10<sup>th</sup> | 1:00–2:30 p.m. ET

March 24<sup>th</sup> | 1:00–2:30 p.m. ET

*Not for Public Dissemination: The ACO Spotlight Newsletter is a biweekly publication by CMS for ACOs participating in the Shared Savings Program. It is distributed by email only to ACO contacts listed in CMS' ACO-MS. This newsletter is not intended to establish CMS policy and is for informational purposes only for the sole use of the individual(s) to whom it is addressed, and individuals associated with their ACO. The newsletter is not intended for public release. The ACO Spotlight Newsletter is published, produced, and disseminated at U.S. taxpayer expense. If you have received this in error, please notify the sender immediately by emailing [SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov).*

February 25, 2021 | ISSUE 4

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### NOIA and Application Cycle Dates Available for a January 1, 2022 Start Date

The Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA) and application submission dates for a January 1, 2022 start date for the Shared Savings Program are now posted on the [Application Types & Timeline webpage](#).

**CMS will accept NOIAs via the [ACO Management System \(ACO-MS\)](#) from June 1, 2021, through June 7, 2021, ending at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time (ET).** A NOIA submission does not bind your organization to submit an application; however, you must submit a NOIA to be eligible to apply for, renew or early renew your participation in the Shared Savings Program for a January 1, 2022 start date. Each ACO should only submit one NOIA.

CMS has streamlined the Shared Savings Program application process into two phases to give ACOs more time to respond to deficiencies. During Phase 1, ACOs will first submit their ACO Participant List, Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Affiliate List (if applicable), and draft repayment mechanism documentation (if applicable). **The final opportunity to add ACO participants and/or SNF affiliates is during the Phase 1 request for information (RFI-1) response period, which closes on August 3, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET.** CMS will adjudicate ACO Participant and SNF Affiliate Lists at the end of Phase 1, and ACOs will be unable to make changes to these lists after Phase 1.

During Phase 2 of the application, ACOs will submit other elements, including the governing body, organizational chart, attestations, and final repayment mechanisms (if applicable). CMS will then adjudicate these elements and issue final dispositions after Phase 2. Refer to the Application Types & Timeline webpage for a comprehensive overview of all relevant dates. To submit ACO participant, SNF affiliate, and participation options change requests, currently participating ACOs will follow the same schedule as Phase 1 of the application cycle.

If you have any questions, please log into ACO-MS, and click the Helpdesk icon (located within the ACO-MS banner) or contact the ACO Information Center at [SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov) or 1-888-734-6433 (Option 1).

## **CMS to Apply MIPS Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Policy for the 2020 Performance Period in Response to COVID-19, Reopen Application**

CMS continues to offer flexibilities to provide relief to clinicians responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. CMS is applying the [2020 Merit-based Incentive Payment System \(MIPS\) Automatic Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Policy](#) to all MIPS-eligible clinicians for the 2020 performance period. CMS is **reopening** the MIPS extreme and uncontrollable circumstances (EUC) application for individual MIPS-eligible clinicians, groups, virtual groups, and Alternative Payment Model (APM) Entities through March 31, 2021, at 8:00 p.m. ET. The application is available on the Quality Payment Program (QPP) [About QPP Exemptions webpage](#). Please note that applications received between now and March 31, 2021, will not override previously submitted data for individuals, groups, and virtual groups.

### **APM Entities**

APM Entities participating in MIPS APMs can submit an EUC application with some differences from the MIPS EUC policy for individuals, groups, and virtual groups:

- APM Entities are required to request reweighting for all performance categories.
- More than 75 percent of the MIPS-eligible clinicians in the APM Entity must be eligible for reweighting in the Promoting Interoperability performance category.
- **Unlike applications for individuals, groups, and virtual groups, an APM Entity's approved application for performance category weighting will override previously submitted data.**

Please note that if an APM Entity does not report for the 2020 performance period (or does not have an approved EUC application), their MIPS-eligible clinicians will receive a negative payment adjustment in the 2022 payment year.

### **Additional Resources**

- [2020 MIPS Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Application Resources](#)
- [Quality Payment Program – COVID-19 Response fact sheet](#)

For more information, please visit the [QPP COVID-19 Response webpage](#). If you need additional assistance, contact the QPP Service Center at [QPP@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:QPP@cms.hhs.gov) or 1-866-288-8292, Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. ET. Customers who are hearing impaired can dial 711 to be connected to a telecommunications relay service (TRS) Communications Assistant.

### **ACO-MS Login Functionality**

As noted in the *ACO Spotlight Newsletter*, Issue 2, published on January 28, 2021, CMS changed the [ACO-MS](#) login solution from the Enterprise Identity Management (EIDM) to the Identity Management (IDM) system. Users with existing EIDM credentials were migrated to the new IDM system.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, users with existing EIDM accounts received an email entitled "EIDM CMS User Removal Notification." The email was sent in error. There is no change to existing users' ACO-MS access, and no action from ACO-MS users related to this email is required. CMS apologizes for any inconvenience this email may have caused. If you have additional questions, please contact your CMS Coordinator.

### **Introducing the BOSC Customer Satisfaction Survey**

In early March, the Business Operations Support Center (BOSC) Help Desk will be implementing a customer satisfaction survey within ServiceNow (SNow), replacing the current survey on the Help Desk Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system. The feedback received will be used to improve delivery and provide users with the best possible service.

## What will the recipient of the survey expect to see?

Upon resolving a SNow case, the user may receive an email from [CMSITSM@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:CMSITSM@cms.hhs.gov) with an embedded link to the secure CMS Connect site to complete the survey. The user will be presented with five standard questions, rated on a scale from 1–5, and a comment text box. The survey should take less than five minutes to complete. After completion and subsequent submission, the user will receive an acknowledgment that the survey was submitted.

## RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE

### Supplemental Information for the PY 2020 Quarter 4 Reports Correction

CMS identified two corrections to the supplemental information provided to ACOs as a part of the Performance Year (PY) 2020 Quarter 4 (Q4) Report Packages. These corrections did **not** impact any of the data provided in the reports. The cover notice provided to all ACOs mistakenly indicated that the new measure, “Observation Stays,” was included without data in Table 1 of the *Aggregate Expenditure/Utilization Report*. This measure was not included in Table 1 of the *Expenditure/Utilization Report* (EXPU Report) for PY 2020 Q4, and will instead be included in the *PY 2021 Adjusted Historical Benchmarks Report* at which point the measure will be included and populated with data in both Table 1 of the EXPU Report and in the *Beneficiary Expenditure and Utilization Report* (BEUR). Additionally, the “Parameters” tab of the EXPU Report for Prospective ACOs indicated that the “Claims Completion Factor” applied was 1.105 rather than 1.072, which was the completion factor used in all expenditure calculations. For any questions, please contact the Shared Savings Program at [SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov).

### Case Study on OneCare Vermont ACO’s Innovation Fund: Now Available

The Learning System has released a case study describing the development and implementation of OneCare Vermont’s Innovation Fund, which distributes grants to local organizations to help improve the quality, cost, and care experience for state residents. The ACO used a systematic approach to solicit, evaluate, and support ideas for innovative programs, attracting 81 proposals and awarding over \$1 million to eight diverse projects in 2019. OneCare’s experience may be informative for organizations seeking to launch or expand grant-making programs that foster innovation and support health system transformation.

CMS extends its appreciation to OneCare Vermont for sharing the details of its Innovation Fund. You can find the case study in the Webinars section of the Knowledge Library tab in [ACO-MS](#) by searching “OneCare Vermont ACO: Innovation Fund.”

## EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CMS Web Interface Biweekly Support Call

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021, 1:00 P.M.–2:30 P.M. EASTERN TIME**

- [Register here](#)
- **Audience:** All ACOs and group reporters
- **Description:** CMS is hosting a series of support calls for ACOs and groups that are reporting data for the Quality Performance Category through the CMS Web Interface for PY 2020. The support calls will highlight important information and updates on reporting quality data and provide ACOs and groups with an opportunity to engage in question and answer sessions with CMS subject matter experts. For more information on the CMS Web Interface Biweekly Support Calls, view the [2020 Performance Period: CMS Web Interface Support Calls for ACOs, Groups, and Virtual Groups Reporting Quality Data to CMS](#) informational flyer.

## CMS Web Interface Biweekly Support Call

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021, 1:00 P.M.–2:30 P.M. EASTERN TIME**

- [Register here](#)
- **Audience:** All ACOs and group reporters
- **Description:** CMS is hosting a series of support calls for ACOs and groups that are reporting data for the Quality Performance Category through the CMS Web Interface for PY 2020. The support calls will highlight important information and updates on reporting quality data and provide ACOs and groups with an opportunity to engage in question and answer sessions with CMS subject matter experts. For more information on the CMS Web Interface Biweekly Support Calls, view the [2020 Performance Period: CMS Web Interface Support Calls for ACOs, Groups, and Virtual Groups Reporting Quality Data to CMS](#) informational flyer.

### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOs

To help ACOs navigate questions regarding the Shared Savings Program.

#### ACO Information Center

Click the [ACO-MS](#) Helpdesk icon (located within the ACO-MS banner)

- Program operations and policy inquiries; technical inquiries related to program data and program reports; ACO-MS; and assistance with user access to CMS systems, including password resets
- 1-888-734-6433 (select Option 1) or 1-888-734-6563 (TTY/TDD)

#### Quality Payment Program Service Center

[QPP@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:QPP@cms.hhs.gov)

- Inquiries related to MIPS, APMs, MACRA, CAHPS® for ACOs survey, quality measures, quality reporting for 2017 and future years, and CMS Web Interface
- 1-866-288-8292

*Not for Public Dissemination: The ACO Spotlight Newsletter is a biweekly publication by CMS for ACOs participating in the Shared Savings Program. It is distributed by email only to ACO contacts listed in CMS' ACO-MS. This newsletter is not intended to establish CMS policy and is for informational purposes only for the sole use of the individual(s) to whom it is addressed, and individuals associated with their ACO. The newsletter is not intended for public release. The ACO Spotlight Newsletter is published, produced and disseminated at U.S. taxpayer expense. If you have received this in error, please notify the sender immediately by emailing [SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov).*

*This communication material was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. It may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of its contents.*

*Section 508 Disclaimer: This document and information contained therein may not adhere to Section 508 Compliance standards and guidelines for accessibility by persons who are visually impaired. Those who are visually impaired should contact the ACO Information Center at 1-888-734-6433 (Option 1) for assistance.*