

ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

March 23, 2020 | ISSUE 6

AT A GLANCE

UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **CMS Web Interface Closes Quality Reporting: April 30th, 8:00 p.m.**

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- **CMS Emergency Preparedness Webpage**
- **PY 2020 Preliminary or Adjusted Historical Benchmark Report Packages Available March 30th**
- **Million Hearts[®] Hypertension Control Champions Challenge is Open**

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Leveraging Primary Care to Support Patients with Chronic Conditions: Insights from SCF**
March 25th | 12:00–1:00 p.m. ET
- **CMS Web Interface Support Call**
March 25th | 1:00–2:00 p.m. ET

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CMS Web Interface Quality Reporting Deadline for ACOs Extended to April 30, 2020

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that the 2019 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) data submission deadline will be extended by 30 days to **April 30, 2020**.

CMS is implementing additional extreme and uncontrollable circumstances policy exceptions and extensions for upcoming quality measure reporting and data submission deadlines. CMS is also evaluating options for providing relief around participation and data submission for 2020. For more information, [click here](#).

CMS Emergency Preparedness Webpage

ACOs and their health care providers are part of the Medicare fee-for-service program, and COVID-19 clinical, billing, and coverage guidance regarding flexibilities apply to all ACO health care providers and the patients they serve. CMS encourages ACOs and all health care providers to review the [CMS Emergency Preparedness webpage](#) for more information.

PY 2020 Preliminary or Adjusted Historical Benchmark Report Packages Available March 30, 2020

On March 30, 2020, ACOs will receive their *Performance Year (PY) 2020 Preliminary or Adjusted Historical Benchmark Report* packages. The packages include an ACO's *PY 2020 Preliminary or Adjusted Historical Benchmark Report* along with informational files for each of the ACO's three benchmark years: an *Annual Assignment List Report*, *Annual Assignment Summary Report*, *Annual Aggregate Expenditure/Utilization Report*, and *Annual Non-Claims-Based Payment File*.

Preliminary Historical Benchmarks

ACOs that entered an agreement period beginning January 1, 2020, will receive their *PY 2020 Preliminary Historical Benchmark Reports*. CMS establishes an ACO's historical benchmark at the start of its first agreement period. The benchmark is based on the most recent three calendar years prior to the start of the ACO's current agreement period. For ACOs entering a first or subsequent agreement period on January 1, 2020, CMS applied the benchmarking methodology that was finalized in the [December 2018 Final Rule](#) and codified at [42 CFR § 425.601](#). This Historical

Benchmark report is based on the January 2020 ACO Participant List that your ACO certified and the assignment methodology your ACO selected. Due to the timing of reports, some data needed to calculate values for the third Benchmark Year (BY 3), which aligns with Calendar Year (CY) 2019, is not yet available. ACOs entering an agreement period on January 1, 2020, will receive a final Historical Benchmark report package later this year, after 3 months of claims run-out and all relevant data inputs are available.

For ACOs that entered an agreement period beginning January 1, 2020, CMS encourages ACOs to view a video walkthrough of the Historical Benchmark Report applicable to ACOs beginning an agreement period on July 1, 2019, and in subsequent years, which is available through the Program Resources section of the [ACO Management System](#) (ACO-MS) Knowledge Library by searching for “Overview of Historical Benchmark Reports for Agreement Periods Beginning on July 1, 2019.”

Further, CMS hosted a webinar on the benchmarking methodology applicable to this cohort of ACOs and encourages ACOs to listen to the recording of this event and review the related materials, which is available through the Webinars section of the ACO-MS Knowledge Library by searching for “July 2019 Historical Benchmark and Methodology.”

Adjusted Historical Benchmarks

CMS adjusts the historical benchmark annually to account for changes in an ACO’s certified ACO Participant List, for a change in the ACO’s beneficiary assignment methodology selection, or both. All ACOs that made modifications to their PY 2020 ACO Participant List (including a change to a CMS Certification Number (CCN) billing through a Medicare enrolled taxpayer identification number (TIN), where the CCN is used in assignment) or changed their PY 2020 beneficiary assignment methodology will receive adjusted historical benchmarks for PY 2020. (If there were no ACO Participant List or beneficiary assignment methodology changes, the benchmark will not be adjusted, and these ACOs will not receive adjusted historical benchmarks.)

CMS encourages ACOs to access various resources (e.g., videos and webinars) available on the ACO-MS Knowledge Library. Resources that are applicable to your ACO are listed in the Cover Notices provided with your Historical Benchmark Report packages.

Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Champions Challenge is Open

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Champions Challenge on February 21st. This annual program recognizes health care professionals, practices, and health systems that are achieving ≥ 80 percent blood pressure control. Currently, there are 118 Champions from 36 states and D.C. (2012–2019), many of which have come from ACOs. Million Hearts® welcomes applicants from all states, but would like to recognize Champions from the states that are currently without Champions, including AL, AK, AR, AZ, DE, ID, IN, ME, MS, NC, NE, NV, SD, and VT. The deadline to apply is April 6, 2020, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). Apply at the [Million Hearts® webpage](#).

RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE

Q4 Opioid Utilization Reports Delivered on Monday, March 9, 2020

CMS released the informational-only *2019 Quarter 4 (Q4) Opioid Utilization Report* package on March 9, 2020. The report package was delivered to your ACO as a zip file that includes a cover notice and the opioid report. The report is accessible through your ACO’s Managed File Transfer (MFT) mailbox and through the [SSP ACO Portal](#). The download is entitled *Quarterly Claims-Based Quality Measure Report*.

The zip file is named with the following convention: "P.Axxxx.ACO.QQR." If accessing the file through your MFT mailbox, save the file and append ".zip" to the end of the file name to open the zip file and its contents. This file will be available in the MFT mailbox for 100 days from the delivery date, and through the SSP ACO Portal indefinitely.

The *Q4 Opioid Utilization Report* may show a decrease in beneficiaries since exclusion criteria of cancer diagnosis or hospice are applied on a year-to-date basis for three measures. Because the exclusions are cumulative, beneficiaries included in prior quarterly reports may not be included in this report.

For additional assistance, the informational [Opioid Utilization Report Overview video](#) is available to help review the contents of the quarterly *Opioid Utilization Report* and details of the four opioid utilization measures.

March CCLFs and Claims Run-Out Files

March Claim and Claim Line Feeds (CCLFs) will be available to ACOs on March 16, 2020, for PY 2020 assignable or prospectively assigned beneficiaries. These files will be available in the ACOs' MFT mailbox for 100 days after the delivery date.

CMS will also provide claims run-out CCLFs during the months of February, March, and April to the ACOs continuing their participation in the Shared Savings Program from the prior year. Continuing ACOs will receive claims with service dates through the end of December 2019 as an additional set of CCLFs. The run-out CCLFs will include claims for the beneficiary population from the ACOs' performance year that ended on December 31, 2019.

The March delivery timeline for the CCLFs and Exclusion files is as follows:

File	Delivery	Naming Convention
Regular CCLFs (All ACOs)	March 16 th	P.A****.ACO.ZCY**.Dyymmdd.Thhmmss
Monthly Exclusion Files (All ACOs)	March 9 th	P.A****.BNEX.Y**.Dyymmdd.Thhmmss
Run-out CCLFs (ACOs continuing from 2019)	March 25 th	P.A****.ACO.ZCR**.Dyymmdd.Thhmmss
Run-out Exclusion Files (ACOs continuing from 2019)	March 19 th	P.A****.BNEX.R**.Dyymmdd.Thhmmss

ACOs should refer to the *CCLF Information Packet (IP)*, V28 and *ACO and ACO-OS Data Exchange User Guide*, V10 for additional information on CCLFs and the Exclusion files.

For technical assistance, please contact the ACO Information Center at SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov or 1-888-734-6433 (Option 1).

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Cross-Model Webinar – Leveraging Primary Care to Support Patients with Chronic Conditions: Insights from Southcentral Foundation

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020, 12:00 P.M.–1:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register here](#)
- **Audience:** ESCOs, Next Generation ACOs, and Shared Savings Program ACOs
- **Description:** The ACO Learning System is excited to announce a new cross-model webinar. Please join for a webinar led by Dr. Douglas Eby, Vice President of the Medical Services Division at [Southcentral Foundation](#) (SCF). During the webinar, Dr. Eby will spotlight SCF's approach to primary care to support patients with chronic conditions such as End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). SCF is an Alaska Native-owned non-profit health care organization, serving nearly 65,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people. Currently, 80 percent of SCF's encounters take place virtually, as SCF supports residents from 55 rural villages. The webinar will include a discussion around how ACOs and ESRD Seamless Care Organizations (ESCOs) can engage primary care providers, nephrologists, and other specialists in patient care plans and treatment across the continuum. This event will be open to ESCOs, Next Generation ACOs, and Shared Savings Program ACOs. The slide deck will be available on the [ACO-MS](#) Knowledge Library.

CMS Web Interface Weekly Support Call

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020, 1:00 P.M.–2:00 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 2019. The support calls will highlight important information and updates on reporting quality data and provide ACOs and groups with an opportunity to engage in Q&A sessions with CMS SMEs. For more information on the CMS Web Interface Weekly Support Calls, view the [CMS Web Interface Support Calls for ACOs and Groups Reporting Quality Data to CMS flyer](#).

Registration Open for Spring 2020 IPLCs

Note: CMS has made the decision to transition all CMS-sponsored conferences and training to virtual events through the end of April 2020. For the ACO Learning System, this extension will apply to the in-person learning collaborative (IPLC) meetings scheduled for April 24th in Dallas and for April 30th in New York. This change supports prevention efforts through social distancing and is consistent with current guidance from the CDC. More instruction will be forthcoming regarding the redesign of these two virtual IPLC events. CMS will reassess the format of IPLCs scheduled for May and June as these events get closer. Please email Katie Nerney at knerney@ihi.org with any questions about the IPLCs.

Who should attend?

All Shared Savings Program ACOs in each CMS region are invited to attend regional IPLC meetings held in the spring and fall. You can use the links below to register for the upcoming IPLC meeting in your region.

IPLCs will include presentations and discussion on how to improve quality and lower costs. Attendees will discuss specific improvement strategies, such as setting aims, using data to inform improvement, and engaging stakeholders. ACO staff who work on quality and performance improvement initiatives may be most interested in attending.

Interested in presenting?

ACOs interested in presenting formally at the IPLC meeting are encouraged to express interest using [this link](#). If your proposal is selected, a member of CMS' Learning System team will contact you to discuss a potential presentation.

Note: CMS asks that ACOs located in Region V choose either the meeting in Detroit or the meeting in Chicago. Please do not register for both Region V events.

CMS Region	Date	City	Location	Registration
Region I: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT	May 28 th	Boston	Institute for Healthcare Improvement	Register here by May 14 th
Region II: NJ, NY, PR, VI	April 30 th	New York City	Virtual only	Register here by April 16 th
Region III: DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV	June 18 th	Baltimore	CMS Central Office	Register here by June 4 th
Region IV: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN	June 4 th	Atlanta	Sam Nunn Federal Building	Register here by May 21 st
Region V(A): IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI	June 25 th	Chicago	Ralph H. Metcalfe Federal Building	Register here by June 11 th
Region V(B): IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI	May 7 th	Detroit	University of Michigan Detroit Center	Register here by April 23 rd
Region VI: AR, LA, OK, NM, TX	April 24 th	Dallas	Virtual only	Register here by April 10 th
Regions VII & VIII: CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY	June 11 th	Kansas City	Richard Bolling Federal Building	Register here by May 28 th
Regions IX & X: AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA	May 14 th	San Francisco	San Francisco Federal Building	Register here by April 30 th

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOs

To help ACOs navigate questions regarding the Shared Savings Program.

Medicare Shared Savings Program

SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov

- Include your ACO ID (Axxxx) in the Subject line or text of the email
- Program operations and policy inquiries
- Technical inquiries related to MFT, CCLFs, the SSP ACO Portal, and ACO-MS
- Assistance with user access to CMS systems
- Password resets for your EIDM User ID
- 1-888-734-6433 (select Option 1) or 1-888-734-6563

Quality Payment Program Service Center

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

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