



ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

AT A GLANCE

UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **Annual Certification Period Ends:**
November 9, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. ET

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- **Enhanced Medicare Enrollment and SNF Star Rating Functionality in ACO-MS**
- **Reminder: APM Incentive Payment Details Available**
- **ACO Learning System Feedback Focus Groups**

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Building Trusting Relationships with Beneficiaries**
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- **BCDA Office Hours**
November 18th | 2:00–3:00 p.m. ET
- **Highlights of the Care Coordination Toolkit**
December 9th | 2:30–4:00 p.m. ET

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Annual Certification Period Now Open Through November 9, 2020

Prior to the start of a new performance year (and at the end of an agreement period for existing ACOs), the Shared Savings Program requires all currently participating ACOs and certain terminating ACOs to review, certify, and electronically sign documents related to their participation in the Shared Savings Program and, if applicable, the Medicare ACO Track 1+ Model (Track 1+ Model). ACOs approved for a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) 3-Day Rule Waiver will need to sign additional documentation.

The following ACOs have actions to take during the Annual Certification period in advance of Performance Year (PY) 2021:

- All currently participating ACOs in the Shared Savings Program continuing on to PY 2021 including ACOs that have elected to maintain, or “freeze,” their participation in the same level of the BASIC track’s glide path that they entered for PY 2020, as well as ACOs whose ACO Participation Agreement is scheduled to end December 31, 2020, that have voluntarily elected to extend their existing agreement period for an optional fourth performance year.
- All terminating ACOs with a termination date on or before December 31, 2020, that will be reconciled.

The Annual Certification period is now open and will end on **Monday, November 9, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time (ET)**. The ACOs outlined above must log into the [ACO Management System](#) (ACO-MS) to review and sign their Annual Certification documents. **All Annual Certification activities must be completed by November 9, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET.**

Refer to the *Annual Certification Handbook* and *How to Review and Certify the ACO Participant List and ACO Provider/Supplier List in ACO-MS* tip sheet, located in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS, for additional information.

Confirm That Signatory Contacts Can Log into ACO-MS

ACOs should confirm that an individual is assigned to each of the Annual Certification signatory contact types in ACO-MS: **ACO Executive, Authorized to Sign (primary and secondary) Contacts, Data Use Agreement (DUA) Requestor, and DUA Custodian**. If a signatory contact is not assigned or needs to be updated, any ACO

user with administrative privileges—ACO Executive, CMS Liaison, Authorized to Sign (primary and secondary) Contacts, and the Application Contacts (primary and secondary)—can add or edit an ACO's contacts.

For additional information on how to update contacts or how to add users to ACO-MS, refer to the *Overview of ACO-MS User Access and ACO Contacts* tip sheet, located in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS.

Review Your ACO's Data

CMS strongly encourages ACOs to allocate enough time and resources to thoroughly review their ACO Participant List, ACO Provider/Supplier List, and/or SNF Affiliate List (if applicable). ACOs are able to edit the ACO Provider/Supplier List for PY 2021 if they wish, but the deadline for making changes to the ACO Participant List and SNF Affiliate List has passed.

Additional Assistance

If an ACO needs technical assistance with Annual Certification, please contact the Shared Savings Program mailbox by emailing SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov, calling 1-888-734-6433 (select Option 1), or 1-888-734-6563 (TTY/TDD). Please include your ACO ID and copy your CMS coordinator on any correspondence.

Enhanced Medicare Enrollment and SNF Star Rating Functionality in ACO-MS

On October 22, 2020, CMS launched enhanced functionality allowing ACOs to review ACO participant and SNF affiliate Medicare enrollment information and SNF affiliate star ratings under the CMS 5-Star Quality Rating System directly within [ACO-MS](#).

This enhanced Medicare Enrollment and SNF Star Rating functionality allows ACOs to identify ACO participants or SNF affiliates that may have become non-Medicare-enrolled and/or now have an overall rating below three stars. This information should help ACOs manage their ACO Participant List and SNF Affiliate List and may also be used in discussions with ACO participants and SNF affiliates. Beginning in 2021, each month until the end of the change request cycle, the ACO participant and SNF affiliate Medicare enrollment information and SNF affiliate star ratings will be updated using the data in the [Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System](#) (PECOS) and [CMS Nursing Home Compare](#).

Accessing Medicare Enrollment and SNF Star Rating Functionality

To review Medicare enrollment and SNF star rating information, ACOs may log into ACO-MS and navigate to the ACO Participants tab and the SNF Affiliates tab (if the ACO is approved for the SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver) for their ACO. At the top of both tabs, a banner message summarizing pertinent program requirements will be displayed.

To identify any ACO participant(s) or SNF affiliate(s) that may be non-Medicare-enrolled (per the most recent status update from the PECOS) and/or have a rating below three stars (per the most recent update from CMS Nursing Home Compare), ACOs may do the following:

- Look for a red exclamation point warning icon next to an ACO participant/SNF affiliate record; or
- Use the "Filter" option located next to the search bar to select and view any ACO participant(s) with a Medicare Enrollment Status of "Failed," any SNF affiliate(s) with a Medicare Enrollment Status of "Failed," and/or a SNF Star Rating of "2 or Less Stars."

Managing the ACO Participant List and SNF Affiliate List

If one or more of your ACO participants or SNF affiliates has a Medicare Enrollment Status of "Failed" (as displayed in ACO-MS), your ACO may consider:

- Contacting the ACO participant or SNF affiliate to confirm their enrollment in Medicare is valid or working with the ACO participant or SNF affiliate to reenroll, reactivate, or revalidate their Medicare enrollment.
- Taking any necessary action(s) in ACO-MS to rectify instance(s) of non-Medicare-enrolled ACO participants or SNF affiliates in accordance with established change request cycle deadlines.
- If necessary, deleting ACO participants or SNF affiliates without valid Medicare enrollments.

If one or more of your SNF affiliates has a SNF Star Rating of “2 or Less Stars” (as displayed in ACO-MS), your ACO may consider:

- Informing SNF affiliates of the drop in their overall star rating and educating them regarding the consequences of not maintaining an overall star rating of three stars or higher.
- If necessary, deleting SNF affiliates unable to maintain the requisite three-star rating from your SNF Affiliate List in ACO-MS.

For additional information about managing your ACO Participant List and SNF Affiliate List, refer to the [ACO Participant List and Participant Agreement Guidance](#) and the [Skilled Nursing Facility 3-Day Rule Waiver Guidance](#).

Reminder: APM Incentive Payment Details Available

CMS recently updated the [Quality Payment Program \(QPP\) website](#) to include the 2020 Alternative Payment Model (APM) Incentive Payment details. To access this information, clinicians and surrogates can now log into the QPP website using their Health Care Quality Information System (HCQIS) Access Roles and Profile (HARP) credentials. Please refer to the [QPP Access User Guide zip file](#) for additional details.

Eligible clinicians who were Qualifying APM Participants (QPs) based on their 2018 performance began receiving their 2020 five percent APM Incentive Payments last month. CMS also posted a new *2020 APM Incentive Payment Fact Sheet*—available in the [2020 Learning Resources for QP Status and APM Incentive Payment zip file](#)—to explain incentive eligibility and calculations.

What Do I Need to Do in Order to Receive the APM Incentive Payment?

If you have not received your payment and find your name on the updated *QP Public Notice File for Payment Year 2020* Excel spreadsheet, you will need to verify your Medicare billing information following the instructions provided in the [2020 APM Incentive Payment Notice zip file](#). If you do not verify your Medicare billing information **by the November 13, 2020 deadline**, then CMS will not be able to issue your APM Incentive Payment.

For assistance, contact QPP at QPP@cms.hhs.gov, or 1-866-288-8292. To receive quicker assistance, consider calling during non-peak hours: before 10:00 a.m. and after 2:00 p.m. ET. Customers who are hearing impaired can dial 711 to be connected to a telecommunications relay service (TRS) communications assistant.

ACO Learning System Feedback Focus Groups

The CMS ACO Learning System is interested in understanding what kind of support, events, and resources are most useful to ACOs. Your feedback will inform future learning systems to ensure that their offerings are valuable and actionable.

CMS invites you to share your feedback in a focus group with other Shared Savings Program ACOs. Focus groups are voluntary, last about 60 minutes, and take place between mid-October and mid-November.

If you are interested in participating, email ACOLearningActivities@mathematica-mpr.com by November 9th with “Learning System Feedback” in the Subject line. Include your ACO name and the names and email addresses of participants from your ACO.

RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE

November CCLF Files

November Claim and Claim Line Feed (CCLF) files will be available to ACOs on November 13th for the PY 2020 assignable or prospectively assigned beneficiaries. These files will be available in the [ACO-MS](#) Data Hub and ACO’s Managed File Transfer (MFT) mailbox. The files will continue to be available in the ACO’s MFT mailbox until the mailbox is retired on December 31, 2020.

The November delivery timeline for the CCLF, Exclusion, and Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) cross-reference (XREF) files are as follows:

FILE	DELIVERY	NAMING CONVENTION
Monthly Exclusion Files	November 9 th	P.A****.BNEX.Y**.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst
MBI XREF Files	November 10 th	P.A****.ACO.MBIY**.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst
CCLF Files	November 13 th	P.A****.ACO.ZCY**.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst

ACOs should refer to the *CCLF Information Packet (IP), Version 29 (V29)* and *ACO and ACO-OS Data Exchange User Guide (DEUG), V11* for additional information on the CCLF and Exclusion files.

The CCLF IP and the DEUG are available in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS.

For technical assistance, contact the ACO Information Center at SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov, or call 1-888-734-6433 (Option 1), or 1-888-734-6563 (TTY/TDD).

Tip Sheet on Home Dialysis Patient Education: Now Available

The Shared Savings Program Learning System is excited to share *Tip Sheet: Strategies for Educating Patients on Home Dialysis* from the Comprehensive End-stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Care Model (CEC) Learning System highlighting strategies for enhancing patient education on home dialysis. The tip sheet captures insights shared during three CEC home dialysis action group series and data collection efforts for the recent case study spotlighting Fresenius Kidney Care’s home dialysis program. These strategies may be of interest to ACOs interested in increasing home dialysis utilization through patient education.

The tip sheet can be found in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in [ACO-MS](#). Additional information on the strategies in this tip sheet can be found in the Fresenius Kidney Care case study and the two Home Dialysis Action Group (HDAG) series summaries published in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS. The third HDAG summary will be released this fall. If you have any questions, please email the CEC learning system team at: ESCOLearningActivities@mathematica-mpr.com.

CMS Resource Highlighting Beneficiary Experience: Now Available

The Shared Savings Program Learning System is excited to introduce a PowerPoint of beneficiary stories created to help CMS highlight the beneficiary voice more prominently in its policies.

The resource features three vignettes summarizing beneficiaries’ experiences with the Next Generation ACOs (NGACO) Model and the Shared Savings Program. The resource also includes sample discussion questions and a template to support others with collecting and sharing stories from beneficiaries.

The stories demonstrate the value of capturing the beneficiary voice, e.g., providing opportunities to directly engage with beneficiaries about their experiences, supporting beneficiaries in the management of their care, and identifying opportunities to improve care delivery.

If your ACO is interested in sharing a beneficiary story, please send the story, using the slide deck if desired, to ACOLearningActivities@mathematica-mpr.com, with the Subject line “Beneficiary Voice.” Please do not send identifiable beneficiary information.

You can find the “Capturing the Beneficiary Voice” PowerPoint in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in [ACO-MS](#).

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

MSSP Learning System Webinar: Building Trusting Relationships with Beneficiaries

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2020, 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register here](#)
- **Audience:** All ACOs
- **Description:** This webinar will feature approaches ACOs may consider for beneficiary engagement. A subject matter expert will highlight strategies for building trusting relationships between beneficiaries and care teams. Attendees will learn from other ACOs and discuss innovative options for engaging beneficiaries.

Beneficiary Claims Data Application Programming Interface Office Hours

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020, 2:00 P.M.–3:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Join here](#) or [Find your regional dial-in number](#)
 - Meeting ID: 916 0558 3680
 - Passcode: 886289
- **Audience:** All ACOs
- **Description:** The Beneficiary Claims Data Application Programming Interface (API) (BCDA) enables ACOs participating in the Shared Savings Program to retrieve Medicare Part A, Part B, and Part D claims data for their assigned or assignable beneficiaries. On Wednesday, November 18th, the BCDA Team will hold office hours with current and prospective users to solicit community feedback on a possible new API metadata endpoint, improvements to BCDA's Gzip file download, and the API in general. The BCDA Team is excited to meet to discuss your thoughts about the API and how CMS can best meet your needs. Please visit the [BCDA website](#) and [BCDA Google Group](#) if you have any questions about the API. The BCDA Team appreciates ACOs' continued feedback and support as CMS continues to refine and improve the API.

MSSP Learning System Webinar: Highlights of the Care Coordination Toolkit

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020, 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register here](#)
- **Audience:** All ACOs
- **Description:** This webinar will feature an overview of the components of the *ACO Care Coordination Toolkit*, available on the CMS [ACO General Information webpage](#). The event will cover examples of strategies that ACOs can integrate and build upon in their own care coordination work. ACO speakers will describe their approaches to care coordination and how their initiatives and methods have evolved over time. Attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions throughout the webinar.

Registration Open: Fall 2020 Virtual Learning Collaboratives

This fall, CMS will host a series of region-specific virtual learning collaboratives (VLCs) for all ACOs and ESRD Seamless Care Organizations (ESCOs) participating in the Shared Savings Program, the NGACO Model, and the CEC Model. Meetings for each [CMS region](#) began in July and will continue through November. Use the links in the table below to register for the VLC meeting in your region.

Who should attend?

ACO staff who work on quality and performance improvement initiatives may be most interested in attending. VLCs will feature presentations highlighting innovative ACO strategies for improving quality while lowering costs. Attendees will also discuss key components for implementing improvement strategies, such as setting aims, using data to inform improvement, and engaging stakeholders.

Interested in presenting?

ACO staff interested in presenting formally at a VLC meeting are encouraged to [express interest using this link](#). If your proposal is selected, a member of CMS’s learning system team will contact you to discuss a potential presentation.

CMS REGION	DATE	REGISTRATION
Region 2 (New York City): NJ, NY, PR, VI	November 12 th	Register here by November 5 th
Cross-regional Meeting*	November 19 th	Register here by November 12 th

*ACOs may attend the “cross-regional meeting” if they have a scheduling conflict for their specific region or registration is full.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOs

To help ACOs navigate questions regarding the Shared Savings Program.

ACO Information Center

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; 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

- 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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