

AT A GLANCE

UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **New SSP Helpdesk: July 26, 2023**
- **Phase 1 RFI-1**
Due: August 1, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Shared Savings Program Application – Making the Most of Phase 1 RFI-1**
July 14, 2023 | 1:00–2:30 p.m. ET | [Register](#)
- **Registration Open for Summer Virtual Learning Collaboratives**
August 10, 2023 | 1:00–3:30 p.m. ET | [Register](#)
August 24, 2023 | 1:00–3:30 p.m. ET | [Register](#)
- **Learning System Shared Learning Webinar: Substance Use Disorder Resources and Strategies for ACOs**
August 15, 2023 | 3:00–4:00 p.m. ET | [Register](#)

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RESOURCES

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- [Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule](#)
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PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RESOURCES

New SSP Helpdesk Starts July 26, 2023

On July 26, 2023, CMS plans to transition to a new SSP Helpdesk platform within the [ACO Management System \(ACO-MS\)](#), creating a more streamlined customer experience for ACOs. The release of this new interface replaces the previous system and retires the SSP customer service phone number, as announced in previous issues of this newsletter.

Users will be able to submit questions seamlessly by clicking on the SSP Helpdesk icon (located within the ACO-MS banner) and moving through the available options, including new functionality that enables users to view the progress of their submitted tickets, displayed in an active status bar. ACOs were involved in the development of the SSP Helpdesk via a series of ACO-related usability testing events. Their feedback helped to shape several features of the new system's workflow with the goal of being more user-friendly and intuitive.

CMS encourages ACOs to continue to reach out directly to your ACO Coordinators as a first point of contact with any questions about the program, using the SSP Helpdesk when additional assistance is required. For Shared Savings Program ACOs, please reach out to your ACO Coordinator with your SSP Helpdesk ticket number for assistance with resolving your inquiry. CMS is finalizing a tip sheet that will help ACOs navigate the new system. Stay tuned for updates in a forthcoming newsletter.

The SSP Helpdesk is separate from the existing Quality Payment Program (QPP) Service Center. For inquiries related to Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), Alternative Payment Models (APMs), Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA), CAHPS® (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Provider and Systems) for MIPS survey, quality measures, quality reporting for 2017 and future years, and CMS Web Interface, email QPP@cms.hhs.gov or call 1-866-288-8292. Customers who are hearing impaired can dial 711 to be connected to a telecommunications relay service (TRS) Communications Assistant.

Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule

On July 13, 2023, CMS issued a proposed rule entitled *Medicare and Medicaid Programs; CY 2024 Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Changes to Part B Payment and Coverage Policies; Medicare Shared Savings Program Requirements; Continued Implementation of Requirements for Manufacturers of Certain Single-dose Container or Single-use Package Drugs to Provide Refunds with Respect to Discarded Amounts; and Basic Health Program*, which includes proposed changes to the Shared Savings Program to advance CMS' overall value-based care strategy of growth, alignment, and equity.

CMS encourages interested parties to review and submit comments on the proposed rule. Public comments on the proposed rule are due on **September 11, 2023**. Official comments must be submitted in one of the following ways: electronically through the [Regulations.gov website](https://www.regulations.gov), regular mail, or express or overnight mail. In commenting, please refer to file code CMS-1784-P.

To learn more, refer to:

- Press Release: [CMS Physician Payment Rule Advances Health Equity](#)
- Shared Savings Program Fact Sheet: [Calendar Year \(CY\) 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule — Medicare Shared Savings Program Proposals](#)
- [2024 QPP Proposed Rule Fact Sheet and Policy Comparison Table](#)
- PFS Fact Sheet: [Calendar Year \(CY\) 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule](#)
- Proposed Rule: [CY 2024 PFS proposed rule](#)

PY 2024 Change Request Cycle Phase 1 RFI-1: Now Open Through August 1st Until Noon ET

CMS issued the first Phase 1 request for information (RFI-1) on July 10, 2023. The deadline to respond to RFI-1 is **August 1st at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Eastern Time (ET)**.

Currently participating ACOs may take the actions described in the [Change Request Cycle for Performance Year Beginning on January 1, 2024](#) schedule, which can be found in the Knowledge Library tab in [ACO-MS](#) and review the *Participation Options Report* in ACO-MS.

During the Phase 1 RFI-1 response period, which opened on July 11th at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET and closes on August 1st at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET, ACOs will have the **final opportunity** to:

- Add ACO participant and/or Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) affiliate taxpayer identification numbers (TINs).
- Elect to apply for a SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver.

The [Requests for Information in ACO-MS](#) tip sheet provides information on how to respond to RFIs in ACO-MS.

How to Review Participation Options Information in ACO-MS Applicable to PY 2024

CMS provided all ACOs with a *Participation Options Report* with the release of RFI-1 in [ACO-MS](#) that is applicable for Performance Year (PY) 2024. The *Participation Options Report* has been revised for the PY 2024 Application and Change Request Cycle to include two new tabs for Beneficiary Assignment Estimates and Advanced Incentive Payments (AIP) estimates. Additionally, the Revenue-Repayment Mechanism tab has been revised. ACOs should review this report for any changes to their eligibility to participate in the program. This report is also designed to help ACOs evaluate future participation options.

For more information about the report, download the *PY 2024 Participation Options Report Data Dictionary*, which is now available with the release of RFI-1 in the Application Cycle subtab (via the information bubble), the Reporting tab (via the information bubble in the *Participation Options Report* tile), and the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS.

The *Participation Options Report* has six tabs:

- 50% ACO Composition
 - Provides ACOs with information on the Shared Savings Program participation history of the ACO participants on their latest ACO Participant List for the upcoming performance year.

- 40% Risk Check
 - Provides ACOs with information on whether the ACO meets the definition of experienced or inexperienced with performance-based risk Medicare ACO initiatives (as those terms are defined at [42 CFR § 425.20](#)) based on the latest version of the proposed ACO Participant List for the upcoming performance year.
- Revenue-Repayment Mechanism
 - Revised to provide more concise information about estimated and final repayment mechanism amounts for ACOs establishing a new repayment mechanism.
- Beneficiary Assignment Estimate (NEW)
 - Provides ACOs with assigned beneficiary estimates for the benchmark years and the upcoming performance year at the ACO level and the individual ACO participant TIN level. In the RFI versions of the report, rows for proposed and currently participating ACO participant TINs and rows at the ACO level, which summarizes beneficiary-level estimates across all TINs, will be displayed. Values in the ACO-level rows reflect ACO participants after accounting for all deficiencies (deficiency information is provided for all ACO participants). For example, for an ACO with an agreement level deficiency (Y) value, the ACO participant TIN **will** be included in the ACO-level row. However, for an ACO with an overlap deficiency (Y) value, the ACO participant TIN **will not** be included in the ACO-level row.
- AIP Estimate (NEW)
 - Provides ACO participant TIN-level and ACO-level information related to AIP to all initial applicants, inclusive of quarterly advance investment payment estimates.
- ACO Summary
 - Includes a new AIP eligibility column for initial applicants and combines information presented in other tabs to summarize an ACO's participation options and program eligibility.

Accessing the Participation Options Report

Option 1: Application Cycle subtab (Note that only information from the ACO Summary tab of the *Participation Options Report* is available through this method.)

- Navigate to the My ACOs tab on the left-side menu and select your ACO.
- Select the Application Cycle subtab.
- Select "2024" in the program year drop-down menu to access participation options information.

Option 2: *Participation Options Report* (Full *Participation Options Report* and all six tabs are available.)

- Navigate to the Reporting tab on the left-side menu.
- Select your ACO from the drop-down menu.
- Select "2024" in the program year drop-down menu to access information for PY 2024.
- Select the .xlsx format (the report is not available in .csv format).
- Select the *Participation Options Report* to download the report.

An updated version of the *Participation Options Report* will also be available at Phase 1 RFI-2 and Phase 1 Dispositions.

2022 MIPS Final Score Preview: Now Available

As a reminder, CMS opened the Final Score Preview period for the MIPS to allow eligible clinicians an opportunity to review the 2022 MIPS final score, submit any concerns, and identify potential issues to CMS for evaluation before CMS calculates payment adjustments for MIPS-eligible clinicians. ACOs are strongly encouraged to preview their final scores during the Final Score Preview period to have any concerns addressed prior to CMS finalizing scores.

Information relevant to ACOs for their Shared Savings Program financial reconciliation will only be found in their quality reports from the Shared Savings Program. For example, only the Shared Savings Program quality reports will reflect the application of the Shared Savings Program Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances (EUC) Policy and the determination of whether the ACO met the Shared Savings Program quality performance standard, including information on the 30th percentile value, Electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM)/MIPS CQM reporting incentive, and first year ACO quality performance standard.

For ACOs that reported via both CMS Web Interface and eQMs/MIPS CQMs, the Shared Savings Program will also provide performance rates for both measurement sets, rather than just the measurement set associated with the MIPS Quality performance category score used for MIPS payment adjustment. The Shared Savings Program quality performance report will also include the current year mean performance rate for Shared Savings Program ACOs by measure and the CAHPS for MIPS composite decile score (as applicable to the eCQM/MIPS CQM reporting incentive). ACOs should receive their Shared Savings Program quality performance reports in August with their 2022 Shared Savings Program financial reconciliation packages.

2022 CAHPS Report Changes

Shared Savings Program ACOs will receive their detailed CAHPS reports from the QPP. The reports may be accessed through your ACO's MIPS Performance Feedback, which will be available in August 2023. Therefore, the CAHPS reports will no longer be included in the Finance and Quality Performance report package from the Shared Savings Program. High-level CAHPS information is still provided in the Shared Savings Program quality performance reports, as noted above.

2023 APM Incentive Payment Details Available: Learn if Action is Needed

CMS has published 2023 APM Incentive Payment details on the QPP website. The Shared Savings Program is sharing this information with ACOs so that eligible clinicians who have not received their payments are made aware that the QPP is trying to reach them to complete the disbursement. To access this information, clinicians and surrogates can now log in to the [QPP website](#) using their [Health Care Quality Information System \(HCQIS\) Access Roles and Profile \(HARP\) credentials](#).

Eligible clinicians who were APM Qualifying Participants (QPs) based on their 2021 performance should have begun receiving their 2023 5% APM Incentive Payments earlier this summer. Review the [2023 Learning Resources for QP Status and APM Incentive Payment](#) zip file for more details.

CMS has taken time to ensure correct payments and information are available during the 2023 payment year. CMS' process includes verifying eligible clinicians' Advanced APM participation and the calculation of the APM Incentive Payment.

Log in to the [QPP website](#) to find the amount and the organization paid for both the 10-digit National Provider Identifier (NPI) and the organization.

If an eligible clinician has not received payment, check for the name in the [2023 QP Notice for APM Incentive Payment](#) zip file in the [QPP Resource Library](#), which indicates that the clinician will need to verify Medicare billing information. If the eligible clinician does not verify Medicare billing information by September 1, 2023, then CMS will not be able to issue the APM Incentive Payment. For instructions on how to verify Medicare billing information, review the [2023 QP Notice for APM Incentive Payment](#) zip file.

July CCLF Files

July Claim and Claim Line Feed (CCLF) files for the PY 2023 assignable or prospectively assigned beneficiaries will be made available to ACOs in the Data Hub tab of [ACO-MS](#).

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

FILE	DELIVERY	FILE NAMING CONVENTION	DATA HUB PY	USER FRIENDLY FILE NAMING CONVENTION
PY 2023 Beneficiary Exclusion and MBI XREF files	Week of July 10 th	P.A****.ACO.MBIY23.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst P.A****.BNEX.Y23.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst	2023	Excluded Beneficiary MBI XREF File delivered in July 2023 (txt) Beneficiary Data Sharing Exclusion File delivered in July 2023 (xml)
PY 2023 CCLFs	Week of July 17 th	P.A****.ACO.ZCY23.DYYMMDD.THHMMSST	2023	CCLF delivered in July 2023 (zip)

ACOs should refer to the Version 36 (V36) of the [CCLF Information Packet \(IP\)](#), and V11 of the [ACO and ACO-OS Data Exchange User Guide \(DEUG\)](#), for additional information on the CCLF and Exclusion files. The CCLF IP is available on the [Program Guidance & Specifications webpage](#), and the DEUG is available in the Program Resources section of the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shared Savings Program Application – Making the Most of Phase 1 RFI-1

FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2023, 1:00 P.M.–2:30 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register Here](#)
- **Audience:** This event is open to all Shared Savings Program ACOs and applicants that are responding to the Phase 1 RFI-1.
- **Description:** Join us as CMS hosts an office hours webinar to assist applicants in responding to the Phase 1 RFI-1, which opened July 11th and closes August 1st at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET.

Registration Open for Summer Virtual Learning Collaboratives

MULTIPLE DATES, 1:00 P.M.–3:30 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- **Please RSVP to one virtual learning collaborative (VLC) using the links below:**
 - August 10, 2023 | [Register here](#) by July 27th
 - August 24, 2023 | [Register here](#) by August 10th
- **Audience:** To promote collaboration during this meeting, all attendees must be directly affiliated with either an ACO or CMS. Third party vendors are not invited.
- **Description:** The VBC Learning System is pleased to invite you and your ACO colleagues to join a VLC this summer. Each VLC will convene ACOs across the country to connect with peers and collaborate on strategies to address Health-Related Social Needs (HRSNs) among their beneficiaries. Meeting attendees will participate in virtual knowledge-sharing activities, an ACO panel discussion, and small group breakout rooms. Attendance is limited to ensure all interested ACOs have the opportunity to meaningfully connect with their peers through interactive breakout sessions. CMS invites each ACO to register for the meeting that best aligns with your team’s schedule. CMS requests you limit your enrollment to three participants per ACO; these three attendees may attend the same or different

meetings, at their convenience. ACOs should prioritize staff who work on quality and performance improvement initiatives. Each VLC meeting will have a limit of 150 participants.

Learning System Shared Learning Webinar: Substance Use Disorder Resources and Strategies for ACOs

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023, 3:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register Here](#)
- **Audience:** This event is open to all Shared Savings Program ACOs; ACO Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health (REACH) Model; and Kidney Contracting Entities (KCEs) staff. Team members supporting beneficiaries with behavioral health needs and substance use disorders (SUDs) or participating in care management efforts may be most interested in attending.
- **Description:** Join us on Tuesday, August 15th at 3:00 p.m. ET for a webinar highlighting resources and strategies ACOs may leverage when supporting beneficiaries with SUDs. The event will feature presenters from:
 - The National Institute on Drug Abuse, who will summarize research around SUD-related emergency department and primary care interventions.
 - CMS, who will discuss [CMS Opioid Treatment Programs](#).
 - An ACO participant, who will share lessons learned from implementing a medication-assisted treatment program and integrated care services.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOs

ACO Coordinator

To help ACOs navigate questions regarding the Shared Savings Program, **please contact your ACO Coordinator as your first line of contact.** These additional resources are also available:

ACO Information Center

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

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m. ET

- 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

Quality Payment Program Service Center

QPP@cms.hhs.gov

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. ET

- Inquiries related to MIPS, APMs, MACRA, CAHPS[®] for MIPS survey, quality measures, quality reporting for 2017 and future years, and CMS Web Interface
- 1-866-288-8292
- For hearing impaired customers, please dial 711 to be connected to a telecommunications relay service (TRS) Communications Assistant

[CCSQ Support Central](#): Request Support, Schedule a Call, Chat Support

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