

## AT A GLANCE

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### UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **New SSP Helpdesk: July 26, 2023**
- **Phase 1 RFI-1**  
**Due: August 1, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) ET**
- **Episode-based Payment RFI**  
**Due: August 17, 2023**

### EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Overview of the 2024 Proposed Rule for the Quality Payment Program**  
July 26, 2023 | 2:30–4:00 p.m. ET | [Register](#)
- **SSP Learning System: Virtual Learning Collaborative Meeting**  
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

- [New SSP Helpdesk](#)
- [CAHPS for MIPS Survey Vendor Authorization Tool: Open August 8<sup>th</sup>](#)
- [PY 2024 Change Request Cycle RFI-1: Now Open Through August 1<sup>st</sup> Until Noon ET](#)
- [How to Review Participation Options Information in ACO-MS Applicable to PY 2024](#)
- [Episode-based Payment RFI](#)
- [HHS-OIG Releases Information Blocking Enforcement Rule](#)

## PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RESOURCES

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### New SSP Helpdesk

Beginning July 26, 2023, CMS transitioned 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.

ACO users are 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.

- 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](mailto: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. For Shared Savings Program ACOs, please reach out to your ACO Coordinator with your QPP Service Center ticket number for assistance with resolving your inquiry.

## CAHPS for MIPS Survey Vendor Authorization Tool: Open August 8<sup>th</sup>

On August 8, 2023, the CAHPS for MIPS Survey vendor authorization tool will open. Each ACO's Primary Authorized to Sign (ATS) contact (if a Primary ATS was not designated, the link will be sent to the Secondary ATS or ACO Executive) will receive an individualized link to access the online Vendor Authorization Tool from [mips-cahps@rand.org](mailto:mips-cahps@rand.org). Your ACO's Primary ATS contact, or their designee, must authorize a vendor using the web-based Vendor Authorization Tool by **Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)**. The list of [2023 CAHPS for MIPS Survey Approved Vendors](#) is available in the [QPP Resource Library](#). If you have questions about selecting a survey vendor or completing the vendor authorization process, please contact [mips-cahps@rand.org](mailto:mips-cahps@rand.org), or (888) 580-7732, or your ACO Coordinator.

## PY 2024 Change Request Cycle RFI-1: Now Open Through August 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 p.m. (noon) 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 closes on August 1<sup>st</sup> 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 available 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.

### Episode-based Payment RFI

CMS is pleased to announce the release of a new request for information (RFI) that will inform the development of the next episode-based payment model. The RFI is part of the CMS Innovation Center's ongoing strategy to test models and innovations that support access to high-quality, integrated specialty care—for both ongoing care and procedural or acute care services. The model will focus on accountability for quality and cost, addressing health equity, and creating connections between specialty and primary care providers. CMS recognizes that transitioning to value-based care can be challenging and CMS is committed to supporting providers through CMS models. CMS is particularly interested in hearing from ACO participants on how this next model can be designed to complement ACOs and improve the beneficiary experience as they transition between settings and providers.

Please see the Federal Register posting for more details and information on how to submit comments:

[Request for Information; Episode-Based Payment Model](#). The RFI has a 30-day comment period and comments are due on Thursday, August 17, 2023.

## HHS-OIG Releases Information Blocking Enforcement Rule

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), has posted the [Information Blocking HHS-OIG Rule](#) regarding penalties for health IT developers, health information exchanges, and networks. The final rule establishes the statutory penalties created by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act. If OIG determines that an individual or entity has committed information blocking, they may be subject up to a \$1 million dollar penalty per violation. ACOs can review the rule to understand the OIG's approach to enforcement, which will focus on information blocking allegations that pose greater risk to patients, providers, and health care programs. Enforcement of the information blocking penalties will begin 60 days after publication of the final rule in the Federal Register. More information on Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology's (ONC) information blocking regulations is available on HealthIT.gov at: [Information Blocking](#). To report complaints about information blocking, please visit the [OIG Hotline](#).

## EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### Overview of the 2024 Proposed Rule for the Quality Payment Program

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023, 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME**

- [Register Here](#)
- **Audience:** This is a national call for the QPP, all attendees are welcome.
- **Description:** During the webinar, CMS subject matter experts will cover the following: an overview and future direction of the QPP; review 2024 proposed policy changes for traditional MIPS, MIPS Value Pathways (MVPs), the Shared Savings Program, and Advanced APMs; and review key differences between PY 2023 and proposed PY 2024 requirements. Following the presentation, CMS will answer questions from attendees, as time permits.

### SSP Learning System: Virtual Learning Collaborative Meeting

**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 27<sup>th</sup>
  - August 24, 2023 | [Register here](#) by August 10<sup>th</sup>
- **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 who 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 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.
  - An ACO participant, who will share lessons learned from implementing a medication-assisted treatment program and integrated care services.

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOs

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### 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)

- 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](mailto: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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