

## AT A GLANCE

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### UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **Public Comments on the Proposed Rule on Information Blocking**  
Due: January 2, 2024

### EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SSP Learning System Affinity Group: Integrating Behavioral Health Into Primary Care**  
December 14<sup>th</sup> | 3:00–4:00 p.m. ET | [Register](#)
- **CMS Web Interface Support Call**  
January 10<sup>th</sup> | 1:00–2:30 p.m. ET | [Register](#)

### PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RESOURCES

- [Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Patient Sample Excel Files](#)
- [Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Resources](#)
- [PY 2024 Initial Assignment List Report and Assignment Summary Report: To Be Delivered the Week of December 18<sup>th</sup>](#)
- [ECHO Series on HRSN Screening, Referral, and Transition Support](#)
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- [Shared Savings Program Historical Performance Year Financial and Quality Results Public Use Files: Now Available](#)
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## PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RESOURCES

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### Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Patient Sample Excel Files

On December 21, 2023, CMS will deliver a CMS Web Interface Patient Sample Excel file (formerly known as the CMS Web Interface Beneficiary Sample Excel file) to each ACO reporting quality for Performance Year (PY) 2023. The file contains the same patient sample that will be available through the CMS Web Interface at the start of the CMS Web Interface reporting period on January 2, 2024. This sample is provided in advance so that ACOs may begin locating the patient records that they will need for quality reporting.

The CMS Web Interface Patient Sample Excel file will be delivered through the Data Hub tab in [ACO Management System \(ACO-MS\)](#) in a similar format as in previous years and will contain:

- A list of the assigned patients who were sampled for CMS Web Interface reporting;
- The patient rank for each of the measures into which the patient was sampled;
- Binary flags for each encounter timeframe to indicate under which encounter timeframe(s) each patient was seen during the sampling process for PREV-7: Preventive Care and Screening: Influenza Immunization measure;
- The taxpayer identification number (TIN) or CMS Certification Number (CCN) at which the patient received the most primary care services; and
- The names and National Provider Identifiers (NPIs) of the three providers who provided the plurality of primary care services to the patient will be provided, if available in claims data.

Starting at close of business Thursday, December 21, 2023, please check the Data Hub tab in ACO-MS under the Reports Section in Program Year 2023 to download your ACO's Patient Sample according to the following convention: "P.A#####.ACO.PATB.D231221.T#####."

Please note that the Sample Excel Template file and the Sample Excel Template file with Sample Data will not be posted on the Quality Payment Program (QPP) Resource Library for 2023. These files were used by Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) groups reporting via the CMS Web Interface. ACOs can download their sample file beginning on December 21, 2023, and can download the Excel document from the CMS Web Interface when it opens on January 2, 2024.

## Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Resources

These CMS Web Interface resources are available on the [QPP Resource Library](#):

- [Performance Year 2023 APM Performance Pathway: CMS Web Interface Measure Specifications and Supporting Documents for ACOs](#) (zip)
- [Performance Year 2023 APM Performance Pathway: CMS Web Interface Benchmarks for ACOs](#) (zip)

In addition, several resources will be available on the QPP Resource Library before the end of the year. Please monitor the QPP Resource Library for the addition of the following documents:

- *Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface User Guide*
- *Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Sampling Methodology*
- *Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*
- *Performance Year 2023 CMS Web Interface Data Dictionary*

## PY 2024 Initial Assignment List Report and Assignment Summary Report: To Be Delivered the Week of December 18<sup>th</sup>

CMS plans to deliver the PY 2024 *Initial Assignment List Report* (ALR) and *Assignment Summary Report* (ASR) package on December 18, 2023. The report package will be sent as a zip file and will include a cover notice, ALR (zip), and ASR.

For additional information about the PY 2024 report package, please reference the accompanying cover notice and the *Assignment List Report and Assignment Summary Report User's Guides*, Version 15 (V15), available on the [Program Guidance & Specifications webpage](#) in the Shared Savings Program Report Templates zip file.

The zip file is named per the following convention: "P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.D249999.T0000000."

**Note:** The zip file's name includes a date stamp beginning with "D24," where the "24" indicates the applicable performance year, PY 2024. ACOs may access this file by navigating to the ACO-MS Data Hub tab, selecting your ACO, and selecting "2024" from the program year drop-down menu.

## ECHO Series on HRSN Screening, Referral, and Transition Support

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Community Living (ACL) is inviting hospitals, health systems, ACOs, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to a special series of learning events and discussions around collaborative approaches to screening for health-related social needs (HRSN), connecting with community-based social services, and supporting transitions pre- and post-discharge.

The monthly meeting series and peer discussion groups will run from January through August 2024. The goal is to leverage community partnerships and assets to address patients' unmet health-related social needs. This learning opportunity uses the [Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes \(ECHO\) Model](#)<sup>®</sup>, an "all teach, all learn" approach to peer-based learning. Participating teams will learn from leaders with successful approaches to HRSN screening, referral, and care transition programs and will be equipped with actionable strategies to implement in their own organizations.

**To participate in the virtual ECHO series, ACOs should have an established relationship with a hospital partner or be part of a health system. Participating organizations should plan to include staff from their ACOs, health system, and CBO partners in the learning series.** Recommended attendees may include case managers, discharge planning staff, quality measurement professionals, and senior leadership overseeing population health. More information about this learning series is available [here](#).

If your organization is interested in participating, please complete this brief survey prior to January 12, 2024, to indicate interest: [ACL Care Transitions ECHO](#). If you have any questions, please contact [caretransitions@lewin.com](mailto:caretransitions@lewin.com). Looking forward to your response!

## Shadow Bundles Data: Coming February 2024

CMS will begin distributing shadow bundles data (i.e., episodes of care data) to all Shared Savings Program ACOs starting in February 2024. This data will include raw episode-level claims files, benchmark prices, and summary reporting.

If you want more information on what a shadow bundle is or to learn more about this data offering and the methodology used in designing the files, please take a few minutes to view the [“Introduction to Shadow Bundles” video](#).

## HHS Information Blocking Disincentives Proposed Rule

On October 30, 2023, HHS released a [proposed rule](#) for public comment that would establish disincentives for health care providers found by the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) to have committed information blocking—a practice of interfering with the access, exchange, or use of electronic health information. The proposed rule implements the HHS secretary’s authority under Section 4004 of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act (Cures Act). The proposed rule complements [OIG’s rule](#) that established [information blocking](#) penalties for the other actors identified by Congress (health information technology (IT) developers of certified health IT or other entities offering certified health IT, health information exchanges, and health information networks).

In this proposed rule, HHS proposes to establish the following disincentives for providers that have been determined by OIG to have committed information blocking:

- Under the **Medicare Shared Savings Program**, a health care provider would be deemed ineligible to participate in the program for a period of at least 1 year. This may result in a health care provider being removed from an ACO or prevented from joining an ACO. Restricting the ability of health care providers to participate in the Shared Savings Program for at least 1 year would result in these health care providers potentially not receiving revenue that they might otherwise have earned if they had participated in the Shared Savings Program.
- Under the Promoting Interoperability performance category of the MIPS, an eligible clinician or group would not be a meaningful user of certified EHR technology in a performance period and would therefore receive a score of zero in the Promoting Interoperability performance category of MIPS, if required to report on that category. The Promoting Interoperability performance category score typically can be a quarter of a clinician or group’s total MIPS score in a year.
- Under the Medicare Promoting Interoperability Program, an eligible hospital or critical access hospital (CAH) would not be a meaningful electronic health record (EHR) user in an applicable year. The impact on eligible hospitals would be the loss of 75 percent of the annual market basket increase; for CAHs, payment would be reduced to 100 percent of reasonable costs instead of 101 percent.

CMS encourages interested parties to review and submit comments on the proposed rule. Public comments on the proposed rule are due on **January 2, 2024**. Official comments must be submitted in one of the following ways: electronically through [Regulations.gov](#), regular mail, or express or overnight mail. In commenting, please refer to file code RIN 0955-AA05.

To learn more, refer to:

- [HHS press release](#)
- [Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT \(ONC\)/CMS blog](#)
- [ONC webpage on information blocking](#)

## Shared Savings Program Historical Performance Year Financial and Quality Results Public Use Files: Now Available

CMS recently re-published the [Performance Year Financial and Quality Results](#) Public Use Files (PUFs) for PYs 2013 through 2021. These PUFs have been updated in compliance with the [CMS Cell Suppression Policy](#).

## In Case You Missed It: Resources Available From the Summer 2023 SSP Virtual Learning Collaboratives

The SSP Learning System hosted four Virtual Learning Collaboratives (VLCs) in July and August 2023 focused on improvement strategies to address HRSN among Shared Savings Program beneficiaries. All VLC materials—including the slide deck, transcript of the panel discussion, and high-level event summary—are available in the Knowledge Library tab in [ACO-MS](#). These materials feature ACO insights on using data to design and improve interventions, partnering with CBOs to complement ACO services, and engaging expert staff.

To access the materials, navigate to the Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS and type “VLC” in the search bar. If you need assistance accessing the Knowledge Library, please contact your ACO Coordinator.

### December CCLF Files

December 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 in [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 December 13 <sup>th</sup>	P.A****.ACO.MBIY23.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst P.A****.BNEX.Y23.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst	2023	Excluded Beneficiary MBI XREF File delivered in December 2023 (txt)  Beneficiary Data Sharing Exclusion File delivered in December 2023 (xml)
PY 2023 CCLFs	Week of December 20 <sup>th</sup>	P.A****.ACO.ZCY23.Dyymmdd.Thhmsst	2023	CCLF delivered in December 2023 (zip)

ACOs should refer to 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 Knowledge Library tab in ACO-MS. For technical assistance, contact the ACO Information Center using the SSP Helpdesk icon (located within the ACO-MS banner).

## EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SSP Learning System Affinity Group: Integrating Behavioral Health Into Primary Care

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023, 3:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME**

- [Register Here](#)
- **Audience:** This event is open to all Shared Savings Program ACOs. Team members supporting primary care and behavioral health services—including care navigators, clinicians, and social workers—may be most interested in attending.
- **Description:** Join us for an affinity group focused on ACOs’ strategies for addressing behavioral health among ACO beneficiaries. Attendees will participate in interactive discussion activities to identify challenges and crowdsource solutions around behavioral health integration, including:
  - Approaches to integrating behavioral health into primary care;
  - Available tools for integrating and supporting behavioral health in annual wellness visits, including screening and health information technology tools; and

- Ways to improve the patient experience with behavioral health integration in primary care.

Affinity groups provide an opportunity for interactive peer-to-peer learning and networking. CMS encourages attendees to engage in active discussion and to turn on their cameras during this event.

## CMS Web Interface Support Calls

### WEDNESDAYS, 1:00 P.M.–2:30 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- **Register:**

- [January 10, 2024](#)
- [January 24, 2024](#)
- [February 7, 2024](#)
- [February 21, 2024](#)
- [March 6, 2024](#)

- **Audience:** For ACOs that are reporting quality data through the CMS Web Interface for the 2023 performance period.
- **Description:** CMS is hosting a series of CMS Web Interface Support Calls for those that are reporting data for the quality performance category through the CMS Web Interface for the 2023 performance period. The support calls will highlight important information, provide updates on reporting quality data, and offer an opportunity for ACOs to engage in question-and-answer sessions with CMS subject matter experts. To attend the support calls, you must register for each call by clicking on the links above.

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOs

### ACO Coordinator

For questions regarding the Shared Savings Program, **your ACO Coordinator is your first line of contact.** For further assistance, reach out to the SSP Helpdesk or Quality Payment Program (QPP) Service Center. Refer to the section below to determine which center to contact.

### ACO Information Center

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

- Shared Savings Program operations and policy inquiries; technical inquiries related to program data, reports, and performance; 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, MACRA, CAHPS® for MIPS survey, CMS Web Interface, quality measures, quality reporting, and Promoting Interoperability measures
- 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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