

Center for Medicare

DATE: December 20, 2017
TO: ACO Executive
FROM: Medicare Shared Savings Program
CC: Marketing Contacts (primary and secondary), CMS Liaison, Compliance Officer, IT Contacts (primary and secondary), and Application Contacts (primary and secondary)
SUBJECT: ATTENTION: Important Information about the Medicare Shared Savings Program for Performance Year 2018 Initial (New) and Renewing ACOs

Dear ACO Executive,

Congratulations! As you are aware, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved your organization's application to participate in the Medicare Shared Savings Program (Shared Savings Program) and, if applicable, the Medicare Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Track 1+ Model (Track 1+ Model) and/or the Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) 3-Day Rule Waiver, starting January 1, 2018.

The purpose of this memo is to inform your ACO of important information prior to the start of Performance Year (PY) 2018, including:

- Timing and instructions for issuing any public announcement regarding program acceptance
- Countersigned documents
- CMS coordinator assignments
- Accessing CMS systems
- 2018 preliminary prospective assignment lists and prospective assignment lists
- ACO Spotlight Newsletter
- ACO Marketing Toolkit
- Upcoming webinars

TIMING FOR ISSUING ANY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE

Please do not make any individual public announcements regarding your acceptance into the Shared Savings Program until after CMS posts the names of all PY 2018 Shared Savings Program ACOs. We plan to post the names of all ACOs on Friday, January 5, 2018, on data.cms.gov and will inform you once this information has been made publicly available.

In previous years, CMS has provided ACOs with a press release template to use when making public announcements. We will not provide a template this year, but require that **all statements**

regarding your ACO are complete, accurate, and not misleading. The Accountable Care Organization Marketing Guidance–Performance Year 2018 document in the 2018 Marketing Toolkit provides guidelines for ACOs to follow. If you choose to announce your participation in the Shared Savings Program, you do not need to submit your press release through the [Health Plan Management System](#) (HPMS) Marketing Module for review.

COUNTERSIGNED DOCUMENTS

CMS has countersigned all required Annual Certification documents. You may now log into HPMS and download your Shared Savings Program ACO Participation Agreement; your Medicare ACO Track 1+ Model Participation Agreement, if applicable; and other relevant documents for your records. For new ACOs, your DUA number will be entered in HPMS in January. If you did not receive a countersignature email notification, please contact your primary application reviewer immediately.

CMS COORDINATOR ASSIGNMENTS

All approved initial 2018 Shared Savings Program ACOs will be assigned a CMS coordinator. This individual will assist your ACO with meeting program objectives and will serve as a resource to your ACO. Your CMS coordinator will contact you in late December or early January. Renewing ACOs will maintain their existing CMS coordinator.

ACCESSING CMS SYSTEMS

CMS USER IDs

A CMS User ID serves as your “virtual security badge” for CMS networks, granting you access to the three systems (described below) used by the Shared Savings Program: HPMS, the Shared Savings Program (SSP) ACO Portal, and the Managed File Transfer (MFT) mailbox. If you have new staff joining the ACO or want to establish access to CMS systems for a different user, that individual will need a CMS User ID and password.

Follow the instructions on the [User ID Process webpage](#) to apply for a CMS User ID. It is important to apply in a timely manner, monitor your email, and read all correspondence carefully for further action requests that are time sensitive, as CMS User ID requests may take up to three weeks to process. Submit one [CMS Form CMS-20037](#) for each individual contact requiring a CMS User ID. Mail the original completed request form(s) using certified mail (e.g., FedEx or UPS) to:

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Attention: Gregory L. Stark
7500 Security Blvd
Mail Stop C5-15-12
Location C4-02-02
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

NEW ACO MANAGEMENT SYSTEM COMING IN 2018

HPMS is the web-based information management system through which ACOs submitted their applications to the Shared Savings Program. ACOs will continue to use HPMS in early PY 2018

to submit marketing materials for CMS review, update ACO contacts, change their current agreement information, and submit change requests for the ACO Participant List and SNF Affiliate List. However, while ACOs will begin PY 2018 using HPMS, CMS is in the process of transitioning to a new ACO management system. We anticipate that this system will become operational in early April. The new system will be more customized and user-friendly. Additional information will follow in the coming months. Check the ACO Spotlight Newsletter for updates.

THE SSP ACO PORTAL

Once the CMS User ID is established, you can set up a passcode in the [Enterprise User Administration](#) (EUA), which, in turn, enables access to the SSP ACO Portal. Within the SSP ACO Portal, ACOs have secure access to a variety of program information, such as reports, archived ACO Spotlight Newsletters, webinar audio recordings, and presentation materials.

THE MANAGED FILE TRANSFER MAILBOX

To securely exchange files over the Internet, CMS utilizes the MFT Internet Server, which enables ACOs to send and receive program data securely through their MFT mailbox. ACOs also download Claim and Claim Line Feeds (CCLFs) using the MFT. You will use your four-character CMS User ID to access your MFT mailbox. No additional passwords are required for the MFT mailbox.

2018 PRELIMINARY PROSPECTIVE ASSIGNMENT LIST REPORT, PROSPECTIVE ASSIGNMENT LIST REPORT, AND ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY REPORT

All approved ACOs will receive a 2018 preliminary prospective (ACOs in Track 1 or 2) or prospective (ACOs in Track 3 or the Track 1+ Model) Assignment List Report and an Assignment Summary Report by the end of December. These two reports will be sent as a zip file and will be available via your MFT mailbox and the SSP ACO Portal. Please look for a file named according to the following convention: P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN. You will need to save the file and append “.zip” to the end of the file name in order to open the zip file and its contents. The file will be available in your MFT mailbox for 30 days from the delivery date and through the SSP ACO Portal indefinitely.

For additional information, please see the Assignment List Report and Assignment Summary Report User’s Guides (version 7) located in the Resources section of the SSP ACO Portal. Please note, version 7 details the 2017 Assignment List Report and Assignment Summary Report layouts. We will provide an updated version for 2018 reports soon.

ACO SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

The Shared Savings Program issues a weekly ACO Spotlight Newsletter via the Shared Savings Program mailbox (SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov). The ACO Spotlight Newsletter provides currently participating ACOs with important program information, deadlines, and upcoming webinars.

New ACOs will begin receiving the ACO Spotlight Newsletter in the first week of January. If you do not receive the newsletter, please check the junk or spam folder in your email and ensure that your correct email address is listed in HPMS. Please note that we do not maintain a

separate list for the ACO Spotlight Newsletter. Only contacts listed on your ACO Contact Data page in HPMS will receive the newsletter.

We highly encourage you to read each issue of the ACO Spotlight Newsletter and share it with stakeholders within your organization. Please note, however, that the ACO Spotlight Newsletter is for participating ACOs only and cannot be shared publicly or posted online.

ACO MARKETING TOOLKIT

The ACO Marketing Toolkit contains information on how to communicate with beneficiaries about the Shared Savings Program. The toolkit also includes beneficiary communication templates, fact sheets,¹ and other useful resources. We recommend reviewing the ACO Marketing Guidelines document in the ACO Marketing Toolkit prior to the Shared Savings Program Kickoff Webinar in January.

Several documents have not changed since the 2017 Marketing Toolkit. ACOs that participated in the Shared Savings Program in 2017 may continue to use the following documents from last year's Toolkit (English and Spanish versions):

TEMPLATE MATERIALS

- Beneficiary Information Notice
- ACO Information Card Template
- Poster Language Template
- Beneficiary Letter to Accompany ACO Information Card

Find the 2018 Shared Savings Program ACO Marketing Toolkit on the [SSP ACO Portal](#) in the Announcements section.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

THE SHARED SAVINGS PROGRAM KICKOFF WEBINAR FOR PERFORMANCE YEAR 2018

Monday, January 8, 2018, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)

- **Call Information:** [Join online](#); or by telephone: 415-527-5035; access code: 902 509 861
- **Audience:** All Shared Savings Program ACOs.
- **Description:** The Shared Savings Program will hold a kickoff webinar for currently participating ACOs. Subject matter experts will provide an overview of the Shared Savings Program, including information about major activities that occur throughout the year, the data that is available to ACOs, how to access various systems, and additional resources. A question and answer session will follow the presentation. You may invite anyone from your ACO staff to participate. However, due to limited capacity, we request that each ACO use only one phone line.

¹ Two fact sheets, Improving Quality of Care for Medicare Patients, and Accountable Care Organizations: What Providers Need to Know, are being updated and will be available in early 2018.

- **Materials:** The webinar slides are attached to this memo as a PDF and they are available for download from the SSP ACO Portal.

CCLF USER GROUP – CLAIM AND CLAIM LINE FEED OVERVIEW FOR 2018 STARTERS

Wednesday, January 10, 2018, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ET

- **Call Information:** [Join online](#); or by telephone: 1-857-232-0156; access code: 271840
- **Audience:** All Shared Savings Program ACOs with 2018 start dates.
- **Description:** CMS will provide detailed information on the data contained in Claim and Claim Line Feed files (CCLFs) and the relationship between the data fields. You will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers from subject matter experts. This presentation is for ACOs with 2018 start dates, but all other ACOs are welcome to attend. ACOs more experienced with CCLFs may find this event repetitive and may wish to resume participation in the User Group during the February 2018 session.

SNF 3-DAY RULE WAIVER WEBINAR

Wednesday, January 18, 2018, 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. ET

- **Call Information:** [Join online](#); or by telephone: 1-415-527-5035; access code: 901 477 928
- **Audience:** All Shared Savings Program ACOs approved for the SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver.
- **Description:** CMS will host a webinar to welcome ACOs approved to use the SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver and to review rules, guidance, and operational details related to the Waiver.
- **Materials:** ACOs will receive webinar slides via email prior to the call.

Once again, congratulations! We look forward to working with you in the Shared Savings Program to achieve better care for individuals and better health for populations.



FOR ASSISTANCE

- For general questions, contact: SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov
- For help with your CMS User ID for accessing HPMS, contact: SSPACO_Applications@cms.hhs.gov
- For help using HPMS and technical assistance, contact: HPMS@cms.hhs.gov or 800-220-2028
- For password resets and if your account is locked, contact: CMS_IT_Service_Desk@cms.hhs.gov or 800-562-1963

Include the ACO ID (and CMS User ID when applicable) in the subject line and body of your email.