

ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

May 31, 2019 | ISSUE 22

AT A GLANCE

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- Next Steps for the Application Cycle for a July 1, 2019 Start Date
- Voluntary Termination for the 6-Month Performance Year
- Updated Track 1+ Model Amended
- CAHPS® 2018 and 2019 Benchmarks
- Results on ACOs' Allocation of Shared Savings Distribution
- 2019 Q1 Report Package Assignment List Report File
- Updated ACO Marketing Guidance and Toolkit to be Released in June

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Health IT and Care Coordination**
June 4th | 2:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. ET
- **Overview of ACO 2019 Assignment and Expenditure/Utilization Reports**
June 5th | 2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. ET
- **Spring 2019 IPLCs**

Not for Public Dissemination: The ACO Spotlight Newsletter is a weekly publication by CMS for ACOs participating in the Shared Savings Program. It is distributed by email only to ACO contacts listed in CMS' ACO-MS. This newsletter contains information intended for the use of the individual(s) to whom it is addressed, and individuals associated with their ACO. The newsletter is not intended for public release. If you have received this in error, please notify the sender immediately by emailing ACO@cms.hhs.gov.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Next Steps for the Shared Savings Program Application Cycle for a July 1, 2019 Start Date

The deadline to review preliminary dispositions has passed, and CMS is finalizing its review of ACO's application. CMS anticipates issuing final dispositions on ACOs' applications and change requests on **Tuesday, June 18, 2019**, via the [ACO Management System](#) (ACO-MS). Your final dispositions will indicate that your ACO's application and each ACO participant and Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) affiliate change request have either been "Approved" or "Denied."

The final disposition constitutes an initial determination for reconsideration purposes. Please be aware that the assignment of Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries, among other determinations, is prohibited from administrative or judicial review under section 1899(g) of the Social Security Act and 42 CFR § 425.800. For additional information please refer to the [Requesting Technical Assistance and Reconsideration Review Guidance](#).

For further details, refer to the email issued May 29th, entitled "ATTENTION: Next Steps for the Shared Savings Program Application Cycle for a July 1, 2019 Start Date."

Voluntary Termination for the 6-Month Performance Year (January 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019)

May 31, 2019 is the final day for ACOs to submit a termination request with a termination date of June 29, 2019. As a reminder, an ACO must provide **at least 30 days'** advance written notice to CMS and its ACO participants of its decision to terminate its participation agreement along with the effective date of its termination. The ACO must also complete close-out procedures by the deadline specified by CMS.

ACOs participating in the 6-month performance year ending on June 30, 2019, that did not renew for an agreement period beginning July 1, 2019, **automatically** received a termination close-out package from CMS with an effective termination date of June 30, 2019.

As a reminder, ACOs that select a termination date **before June 30th** are not financially reconciled. CMS encourages those ACOs to report quality on behalf of their ACO participants.

ACOs with a termination date **of June 30th** are financially reconciled for the 6-month performance year and required to report quality for the 2019 reporting period.

In order to notify CMS of its intent to voluntarily terminate, an ACO must now log into [ACO-MS](#). The ACO Executive and Authorized to Sign contacts (primary and secondary) have a link included on the Agreement Details subtab to request termination from the Shared Savings Program.

For additional information on how to submit a voluntary termination notice in ACO-MS, CMS released a tip sheet entitled *Submitting a Voluntary Termination Notice in ACO-MS*, available in the Resources section of the [SSP ACO Portal](#). If you have additional questions, email the [Shared Savings Program mailbox](#) (SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov). Include your ACO ID in the subject line, and copy your CMS coordinator.

Updated Track 1+ Model Amended and Restated Participation Agreement for Track 1+ ACOs

As a reminder, beginning Thursday, June 20, 2019, all ACOs that are participating in the Medicare ACO Track 1+ Model (Track 1+ Model) and those not terminating their participation in the Shared Savings Program on or before June 30, 2019, must review, certify, electronically sign the [Track 1+ Model Amended and Restated Participation Agreement](#), and re-sign the Assurance of Compliance in [ACO-MS](#). These ACOs include Track 1+ ACOs that are renewing or early renewing their participation in the Shared Savings Program and Track 1+ ACOs that are currently participating in a 12-month performance year.

A further updated Track 1+ Model Amended and Restated Participation Agreement will be available on Monday, June 3, 2019. Edits were made to Section III.A on repayment mechanism calculations that allow for consistency with the approach used to previously calculate the amounts under the Track 1+ Model and use of a more recent reference year in performing the repayment mechanism recalculations in advance of Performance Year (PY) 2020. Further, under these revisions, CMS would apply an approach consistent with the Shared Savings Program's regulations for determining whether the amount of an ACO's repayment mechanism must increase and the timing for providing updated documentation to support this increase (if applicable).

CAHPS® 2018 and 2019 Benchmarks

For PY 2018, CMS implemented a shorter, streamlined version of the CAHPS® for ACOs survey, which was administered between October 2018 and January 2019. Survey changes included reducing the number of questions on five Summary Survey Measures (SSMs):

- Getting Timely Care, Appointments, and Information;
- How Well Providers Communicate;
- Access to Specialists;
- Health Promotion and Education; and
- Shared Decision Making.

As a result of the survey changes, scores for PY 2017 are not comparable to the PY 2018 scores. Please note [that benchmarks for PY 2018](#) have been updated to address this change. CAHPS® for ACOs vendors can provide reports to ACOs for informational and quality improvement purposes; however, only scores distributed by CMS are considered official. It is highly likely that vendor results will be different from official CMS results because official scores are case-mix adjusted and weighted to account for the sample design.

ACOs will receive their quality performance reports and CAHPS® for ACOs reports for PY 2018 later this summer.

Results on ACOs' Allocation of Shared Savings Distribution

In order to better understand how shared savings are utilized, CMS analyzed the publicly reported shared savings distributions of 183 ACOs that earned shared savings during their participation in the program. CMS assessed allocation of shared savings across the three categories: ACO participants, ACO infrastructure, and redesigned care processes/resources. Overall, the ACOs reviewed reported a little over \$2.1 billion total in shared savings between 2013 and 2017. On average, 56 percent (or about \$1.2 billion) of the total shared savings were redistributed to ACO participants, 23 percent (about \$500 million) of shared savings were invested in ACO infrastructure, and another 18 percent (about \$400 million) were invested in redesigned care processes/resources. The table below lists the key averages of apportionment of shared savings funds.

| Category | Proportion Invested in Infrastructure | Proportion Invested in Redesigned Care Process/Resources | Proportion to ACO Participants |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Mean | 23% | 18% | 56% |
| Median | 20% | 12% | 60% |
| Minimum | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Maximum | 100% | 100% | 100% |

For those ACOs that started in the same performance year and earned shared savings, they similarly distributed those savings across ACO participants, ACO infrastructure, and redesigned care processes. However, the analysis found that ACOs whose participation in the program began in 2015 distributed slightly more shared savings to participants (63 percent) than ACOs that began in any other year (57–60 percent). Another interesting observation was that ACOs with two-sided risk averaged a slightly higher distribution of shared savings to their participants (65 percent) as compared to ACOs with one-sided risk (60 percent).

2019 Quarter 1 Report Package Assignment List Report File Extraction Instructions

To support extracting files from the 2019 Quarter 1 (Q1) Report Package, CMS is providing additional instructions. The HASSGN.zip file contains the 2019 Q1 Assignment List Report (ALR) comma separated values (CSV) files for each of the ALR tables as well as the Excel files for the data dictionary and parameters files. In order to view these contents, ACOs need to extract the contents of the QEXPU.zip file and then save the file and append “.zip” to the end of the HASSGN file name in order to open the HASSGN.zip file and its contents.

In addition, the HASSGN files will be relabeled as “QASSGN” in subsequent quarterly reports. For Q1 Report Packages, the files and the file names used are:

- *Assignment List Reports Data Dictionary* (Excel file named “ALR Data Dictionary”)
- *Assignment List Report Parameters* (Excel file named “ALR Parameters”)
- *Assignment List Report, Table 1-1* (CSV file named “P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.DDMMYYYY.HHMMSSSS_1”)
- *Assignment List Report, Table 1-2* (CSV file named “P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.DDMMYYYY.HHMMSSSS_2”)
- *Assignment List Report, Table 1-3* (CSV file named “P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.DDMMYYYY.HHMMSSSS_3”)
- *Assignment List Report, Table 1-4* (CSV file named “P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.DDMMYYYY.HHMMSSSS_4”)
- *Assignment List Report, Table 1-5* (CSV file named “P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.DDMMYYYY.HHMMSSSS_5”)
- *Assignment List Report, Table 1-6* (CSV file named “P.Axxxx.ACO.HASSGN.DDMMYYYY.HHMMSSSS_6”)

Updated ACO Marketing Guidance and Toolkit to be Released in Mid-June

CMS will release an updated version of the ACO Marketing and Outreach Guidance and Marketing Toolkit in mid-June that incorporates new requirements finalized in the *Pathways to Success Final Rule*. Included in the toolkit are new templates for the Beneficiary Information Notice, ACO Poster, and SNF 3-Day Rule Waiver Notice. As many provisions of the final rule are effective as of July 1, 2019, CMS encourages ACOs to review the guidance as soon as possible and to notify beneficiaries with updated materials this summer. CMS understands that it may take some time for ACOs to adjust to the new beneficiary notice requirements, and CMS will work with ACOs to ensure that requirements are met in a reasonable timeframe after the July 1, 2019 effective date. The updated guidance and templates will be available on the [SSP ACO Portal](#) and announced via the *ACO Spotlight Newsletter*.

RESOURCES NOW AVAILABLE

HIPAA Breach Reporting Tool

The [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\) Breach Reporting Tool](#) (HBRT) is available to help health care entities better identify breaches of health information and learn how breaches of health information are investigated and resolved. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) created this tool to provide information about reported security breaches available to entities covered by HIPAA.

The HBRT highlights breaches currently under investigation and reported within the last 24 months as well as an archive that includes all past breaches and information about how these breaches were resolved.

CMS encourages ACOs to share this tool with their participants so that they stay informed about current security threats and use the tool in the event that a breach occurs. For additional information on HIPAA breach notification, visit the [HIPAA Breach Notification Rule webpage](#).

Supporting Videos for the June 5th Overview of ACO 2019 Assignment, Expenditure/Utilization, and Quality Reports Webinar

On June 5th, CMS will be providing the “Overview of ACO 2019 Assignment, Expenditure/Utilization, and Quality Reports” webinar. CMS has posted links to the supporting instructional videos for this webinar to the [SSP ACO Portal](#), under the Resources section in the Financial Model Category. CMS developed supporting instructional videos to provide a detailed review of the *Assignment List Reports*, *Assignment Summary Reports*, and *Expenditure/Utilization Reports*. CMS strongly encourages ACOs to review the videos, prior to the webinar, to help them better understand their ACOs aggregate reports and prepare any questions they may want to pose during the Questions and Answers portion of the webinar. See details about the June 5th webinar in the Event Announcements section of the *ACO Spotlight Newsletter*.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

SSP ACO Learning System: Health IT and Care Coordination

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2019, 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register here](#): 1-857-232-0156; 271840
- **Audience:** All ACOs
- **Description:** This webinar will present tools and strategies to integrate health information technology (IT) and data analytics into care coordination workflows. “UOP ACO” and “Healthcare Partners of the North Country” will share their methods for identifying care management activities that could be enhanced or enabled through health IT, and the data reporting and analysis tools they implemented to assist those activities. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions of presenters during the event. This is the first in a series of Shared Savings Program sessions about health IT.

Overview of ACO 2019 Assignment, Expenditure/Utilization, and Quality Reports

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019, 2:00 P.M.–3:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Join here](#): 1-855-829-8848
- **Audience:** All ACOs
- **Description:** This webinar will provide a brief overview of the *2019 Assignment List Reports, Assignment Summary Reports, Expenditure/Utilization Reports, and Quarterly Claims-Based Quality Measure Report* and will provide an opportunity for ACOs to ask questions and receive additional information related to these reports. The aggregate reports are sent to ACOs to provide information on expenditure and utilization patterns, to identify information related to ACOs' assigned beneficiary populations, and to provide ACOs information on their performance on the claims-based quality measures and opioid utilization.

SSP ACO Learning System: Provider Engagement and Performance Feedback

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019, 2:30–4:00 P.M. EASTERN TIME

- [Register here](#): 1-857-232-0156; 271840
- **Audience:** Medicare Shared Savings Program ACOs
- **Description:** This webinar will present tools and strategies for effective provider performance feedback. This will include a framework for identifying performance-related information valued by providers and clinicians and designing an effective reporting structure. ACO presenters will discuss approaches to provider engagement and performance feedback and reporting. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions of presenters during the event. This is the first in a series of Shared Savings Program Learning System webinars about provider relationships.

Save the Date for Spring 2019 In-Person Learning Collaboratives

All Shared Savings Program ACOs in each [CMS region](#) are invited to attend regional in-person learning collaborative (IPLC) meetings held in the spring and fall. Please register for the upcoming IPLC meeting in your region using the links below.

| CMS Region | Date | City | Location | Registration |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Region 3: DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV | June 27 th | Baltimore | CMS Central Office | Register here by June 14 th |
| Region 5(A): IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI | June 6 th | Chicago | Metcalfe Federal Building | <i>Registration Closed</i> |
| Regions 9 & 10: AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA | June 14 th | San Francisco | San Francisco Federal Building | Register here by May 31 st |

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ACOS

To help ACOs navigate questions regarding the Shared Savings Program.

Program and Policy

SharedSavingsProgram@cms.hhs.gov

- For current Shared Savings Program ACOs
- Be sure to specify your ACO ID (Axxxx) in the Subject line or text of the email

ACO Information Center

APOSD@cms.hhs.gov

- Technical inquiries related to MFT, CCLFs, the SSP ACO Portal, and ACO-MS
 - Assistance with user access to CMS systems
 - Password resets for your EIDM User ID
- 1-888-734-6433 (select Option 1) or 1-888-734-6563

ACO-MS Training Videos

[Contact Us/FAQ webpage](#)

- Additional support on ACO-MS system features and functionalities through how-to videos.

CAHPS® Help Desk

ACOCAHPS@hcqis.org

- Inquiries related to technical assistance, comments, or questions on the CAHPS® survey for ACOs
- 1-855-472-4746

Quality Payment Program Service Center

QPP@cms.hhs.gov

- Inquiries related to MIPS, APMs, MACRA, quality measures, quality reporting for 2018 and future years, and CMS Web Interface
- 1-866-288-8292

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