

# Hospice Quality Reporting Program

## Quarterly Updates for October – December 2020

*This document provides Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP)-related updates on events and guidance from the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2020 (October-December 2020) and prepares for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2021 (January –March 2021).*

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### Thank You!

**Thank you for your cooperation as we work together to address this COVID-19 public health emergency. We applaud you, our healthcare heroes, and your selfless service to hospice patients, families, and caregivers during this challenging time.**

### Tips of the Quarter

#### **HQRP Data Collection Starts CY 2021 for the FY2023 APU**

January 1, 2021 starts the Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP) data collection that runs through December 31, 2021. Remember that hospices must meet requirements for **both** Hospice Item Set (HIS) and Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) Hospice Survey to be compliant with the HQRP. Hospices are subject to a 2% reduction in their annual payment update (APU) in FY 2023 if they fail to comply with the HQRP requirements in CY 2021. Please see [Section 1](#) of this Newsletter for further information.

#### **Natural Disasters and Exemptions for 2020 Q3 and Q4**

CMS is currently applying extraordinary circumstances exemptions (ECE) policies for the following non-COVID-related natural disasters:

- **Hurricane Laura (Louisiana and Texas):** CMS declared a public health emergency due to Hurricane Laura for the period of August 22-August 27, 2020. Providers in the counties designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Laura are exempt from submitting quality data for Q3 2020.
- **California and Oregon wildfires:** CMS declared a public health emergency related to the wildfires in California, effective August 14, 2020, and Oregon, effective September 16, 2020. Providers in the counties designated by FEMA for the wildfires are exempt from submitting quality data for Q3 2020 and Q4 2020.
- **More disasters may be added:** Please check the [CMS Current Emergencies Webpage](#) for updates.

## COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Resources

Due to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), CMS will freeze the publicly reported data throughout 2021. For all Compare site refreshes that were scheduled to include CY 2020 data from the exempted quarters (Q1 2020 and Q2 2020), CMS will hold the data constant.

CMS has released a [COVID-19 Public Reporting Tip Sheet](#) which provides additional information to help providers understand CMS' public reporting strategy for the PAC QRP in the midst of the COVID-19 public health emergency. This [Public Reporting Tip Sheet](#) is also available for download on the [HQRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) webpage.

### UPDATES RELATED TO COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE)

The following resources provide information on CMS' response to COVID-19 PHE. As information is periodically updated on the websites listed below, the posting date may be helpful in determining the most recent guidance provided by CMS. We encourage you to check these resources periodically for updates.

- [HQRP COVID-19 Public Reporting Tip Sheet](#) – Explains the CMS strategy to account for quality data which were exempted from public reporting due to COVID-19, and the impact on CMS' Hospice Compare website refreshes
- [HQRP COVID-19 PHE Tip Sheet](#) – Practical guidance to address hospice quality data submissions starting July 1, 2020
- [CMS Coronavirus Waivers & Flexibilities Webpage](#) – Information related to temporary waivers on certain Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, or HIPAA requirements
- [Interim Final Rule with Comment Period \(IFC\) 2](#) – Additional Policy and Regulatory Revisions in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (*posted 4/30/2020 and published in the Federal Register on 5/8/2020*)
- [Interim Final Rule with Comment Period \(IFC\) 1](#) – Revisions in Response to COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (*posted 3/30/20 and published in the Federal Register on 4/6/2020*)
- [Medicare Learning Network Provider Memo](#) – regarding CMS guidance related to relaxed quality reporting requirements (*posted 3/27/20*)
- [COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers](#)
- [Hospice Fact Sheet on New Waivers and Flexibilities](#)
- [White House COVID-19 Task Force Webpage](#) – CMS actions in response to COVID-19

- [CMS Current Emergencies Webpage](#) – Information and updates about natural disasters, man-made incidents, and public health emergencies including COVID-19

**KEEP UP TO DATE ON HQRP AND THE CMS COVID-19 PHE RESPONSE**

We encourage you to subscribe to the Post-Acute Care listserv at [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCMS/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=USCMS\\_12265](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCMS/subscriber/new?topic_id=USCMS_12265)

**Section 1: HQRP Requirements – Be Ready for CY 2021 Data Submissions**

- **General Requirements:** HQRP data collection requirements for both the Hospice Item Set (HIS) and CAHPS® Hospice Survey are defined for the **Calendar Year (CY): January 1-December 31**. To comply with the HQRP, hospices must submit and ensure acceptance of their Hospice Item Set (HIS) and CAHPS® Hospice Survey data, in accordance with HQRP requirements, each CY.
- **Payment** is impacted during the corresponding **Fiscal Year (FY): October 1-September 30**. Hospices are subject to a 2% reduction in their annual payment update (APU) if they fail to comply with the HQRP requirements. Hospices must be compliant with both HIS and CAHPS® in the CY to receive the full APU for the corresponding FY. (See updated information related to COVID-19 on page 3.)
- **CY Data and FY Payment Impacts:** The **Fiscal Year** (As stated above, the FY) begins October 1. The FY payment impacts that can result in a 2% reduction in a hospice’s annual payment updates (APU) for failure to meet the reporting requirements HIS and CAHPS® data are as follows:

**CY 2021 HQRP requirements impact FY 2023 payments. Please be sure to meet the compliance criteria for both HIS and CAHPS to receive your full APU.**

Reporting Requirement	Sample for FY 2023 APU Determinations	Compliance Criteria
HIS	HIS records with a target date 1/1/2021-12/31/2021	At least 90% of all HIS records must be submitted and accepted by QIES ASAP within 30 days of the target date.
CAHPS®	Patient decedents 1/1/2021 – 12/31/2021	Vendor submits data quarterly – each submission must be complete (have 3 months’ worth of data) and must be submitted and accepted by the quarterly deadlines (see <a href="#">Key Dates for Providers</a> for more details).

For more information about HQRP Requirements, please visit the [HQRP Training and Education Library webpage](#) to access the “[Success with the HQRP: Putting the Pieces Together to Meet Compliance](#)” training, [webinar slides](#), and [HQRP Compliance Tip Sheet](#). You can also visit the [HQRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) webpage to download the [Getting Started with the HQRP](#)

**Please Note:** This document is not intended to be used as a guidance document as the information it contains may be time-limited. Please check the HQRP Spotlight and Announcements webpage at <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/Spotlight.html> for all updates related to the HQRP.

resource, or visit the [Hospice Item Set webpage](#) to download the [Timeliness Compliance Threshold for HIS Submissions](#) fact sheet.

## Section 2: HOPE Update

### HOPE Development Process

HOPE Information Gathering	HOPE Testing	HOPE Rulemaking	HOPE Implementation	HOPE Quality Measures
				

We are developing a new standardized patient assessment tool for the HQR, to be proposed in future rulemaking. The hospice patient assessment instrument is Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE).

The HOPE Alpha Test is currently in progress, in which the draft HOPE patient assessment will undergo field testing to establish preliminary reliability and validity of the instrument. CMS has selected 20 Medicare-certified hospice providers to participate in the alpha testing phase. These providers represent the diversity of hospices through their various sizes, geographic locations, urban and rural, business models, and use of electronic and paper-based data collection.

CMS appreciates hospice agencies' participation in the HOPE Alpha Test.

The HOPE is intended to provide hospices with real-time patient assessments to better understand care needs throughout the hospice stay and contribute to the patient's plan of care, with the ability to develop meaningful outcome quality measures. The HOPE will be informed by regular interactions with the patient. HOPE data will support quality improvement activities and calculation of quality measures in a way that mitigates burden on hospice providers and patients.

**Other Resources:** Please look for other resources on HOPE at the [HOPE page](#) of the HQR website.

## Section 3: Public Reporting Updates

The section below includes key public reporting dates. Providers should review the timeline to ensure they are familiar with important upcoming public reporting dates, and refer to the [Public Reporting: Key Dates for Providers](#) page of the HQR website at for more information.

Due to the temporary exemption to the HQR data submission requirements in responding to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, public reporting of hospices' data will freeze after the November 2020 refresh. This means that following the November 2020 refresh, the data publicly reported will be held

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constant through the November 2021 refresh. Further, no Provider Preview Reports will be issued for those refreshes that continue to display the constant or frozen data.

#### Care Compare Refresh Schedule and Preview Periods

Refresh Date	November 2020	February 2021	May 2021	August 2021	November 2021
Refresh Reflects Patient Stays Discharged for Quarters (HIS)	Quarter 1 2019 – Quarter 4 2019	Freeze	Freeze	Freeze	Freeze
CAHPS Quarters included in Refresh (Dates refer to patients' dates of death)	Quarter 1 2018 – Quarter 4 2019	Freeze	Freeze	Freeze	Freeze
HIS and CAHPS: Month that provider preview reports are issued	September 2020	Not Released	Not Released	Not Released	Not Released

#### New Care Compare and Provider Data Catalog Websites

On September 3, CMS launched the new [Care Compare](#) website, a streamlined redesign of eight existing CMS healthcare compare tools available on Medicare.gov, including Hospice Compare. Care Compare provides a single user-friendly interface that patients and caregivers can use to make informed decisions about healthcare based on cost, quality of care, volume of services, and other data. Through Care Compare, patients and families will be able to access all the information that was previously displayed on Hospice Compare.

Hospice Compare is retired as of December 1, 2020. Please bookmark the new [Care Compare](#) website today to continue accessing provider comparison tools.

In conjunction with the launch of Care Compare, additional improvements have been made to other CMS data tools to help Medicare beneficiaries compare costs, such as the [Provider Data Catalog](#). The Provider Data Catalog (PDC) now makes quality datasets available through an improved Application Programming Interface (API), allowing innovators in the field to easily access and analyze the CMS publicly reported data and make it useful for patients.

Visit Care Compare and Provider Data Catalogue today to view November 2020 refresh HQRP data.

## Upcoming Public Reporting Dates

CMS has scheduled several updates to the public reporting websites during 2021.

- In February 2021, CMS will conduct the annual update of the information on Care Compare that comes from the Hospice and Post-Acute Care (PAC) Provider Utilization and Payment Public Use File (PUF). CMS will also add additional information on the characteristics of a hospice's beneficiaries—for example, their race/ethnicity—based on the PAC PUF to Care Compare. As of February 2021, Care Compare will display 2016-2018 PUF information. The PUF provides data from hospices' own adjudicated claims data for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries by hospice providers. You can find more information about the PUF at: [https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/Medicare-Provider-Charge-Data/PAC\\_Hospice](https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/Medicare-Provider-Charge-Data/PAC_Hospice)
- In May 2021, CMS will use calendar year 2019 claims data to update of the zip code file used to power the Care Compare search function for hospices. We will implement the annual claims data update for the zip code file. Please note that the zip codes sourced from HIS records will be held constant using the HIS data included in the November 2020 refresh.

Although public reporting is frozen during 2021, reporting requirements remain in effect. Please visit the [HQRP Key Dates for Providers](#) webpage to view HIS and CAHPS-specific Data Correction Deadlines in 2021.

## Section 4: Other Updates, Announcements, and Resources

To stay informed about compliance with the HQRP Requirements, please read the Hospice Final Rules and materials offered on the [HQRP Spotlights and Announcements webpage](#), [Best Practices webpage](#), [Training and Education webpage](#), and [Reconsideration webpage](#). Also, please subscribe to the [Post-Acute Care listserv](#) to keep informed about the HQRP updates.

**Happy Holidays! Stay Safe! We Care About You and Thank You for All You Do!**