

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Questions and Answers
Open Door Forum: Ambulance
Thursday, March 16, 2022

1. Question: We are in year one or two, one and two. And I missed - there was something that we should start reporting now, the start date or something. I missed that. And I was just wondering if you could clarify that for me.
 - a. Answer: If you're in year one or year two and you haven't already submitted your data collection period start date to CMS, it's important to do that ASAP. The way you do that is to go to the Palmetto GBA website. They have a web form to submit some initial information. This should probably just take a couple minutes. There are questions for data collection period start date and contact information. That's most of it. You can get there. I usually get there just by Googling Palmetto GBA, GADCS. There's also a URL in the slide deck on the last slide, slide 12, and also one point earlier, I think Slide 7. So, you can go there. And the key thing is that data collection period start date and the contact information, that will kind of get you up and running in this process.
2. Question: I had the same question she had. And yes, that's on Page 13 of the handout number five. The website's actually there. I'm on that website right now. We had missed actually doing that originally when we got the confirmation letter, but I'm actually filling that information out now. So, thank you.
 - a. Answer: Excellent. Thanks for doing that. Maybe you can report back how quick it was after you finish. I think it will just take a couple of minutes.
 - i. Comment from participant: I will note one thing that it sort of times out on you and you have to hit the bottom green button saying submit and then it will reopen those fields back up for you to go ahead and enter the information. Otherwise, it sort of doesn't let you enter anything. You enter your first information, your NPI and company name, hit the submit button and then it will let you fill out the contact information. And you can only use Chrome. You can't use Firefox.
 1. Comment from CMS: Good tip. That one I didn't even know.
 - a. *CMS Update: After the Ambulance Open Door Forum, CMS researched these comments regarding the Palmetto GBA website. The website is compatible with Firefox. We ask the commenter to provide the version of Firefox that is being used and the specific issues that are being encountered when using the browser to access our*

This Q and A document was current at the time it was published or uploaded onto the web. CMS policy changes frequently so links to the source documents have been provided within the document for your reference. This Q and A document was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This Q and A document may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

website. As far as a time limit is concerned, there shouldn't be an issue there either. We are not using any authentication or processing for sessions. We are not storing any data on the form until it is sent. We have had thousands of submissions with no report of this thus far. Again, we ask the commenter to provide more specific information related to this issue.

3. Question: We did not receive a letter from our MAC to confirm reporting for GADCS. I was wondering how do I go about that or do I just go ahead on Palmetto and fill out the information?
 - a. Answer: If you know whether your year one, two, three or four then you can find that out by looking for your NPI on the list posted on the GADCS website. If you know your year one, two, three or four, you can just go to that Palmetto website and enter in your information.
 - i. Comment from CMS: But there's an acknowledgement button on there, though, that says by checking this box, I acknowledge receipt of the notification letter. And I just wanted to make sure that that was okay because if you don't click that box, it won't let you move forward.
 1. Answer: You can reach out to your MAC because at this point all the MACs have acknowledged sending out the letters to get the letter itself. I would suggest the first thing that Andrew suggested, which is make sure you were selected first because you don't want to report because you weren't selected.
 - a. Question: Okay. But is it okay to go ahead and still fill out the Palmetto without that letter?
 - i. Answer: You should submit. If you were selected and you are the ambulance organization, you should go ahead and fill out your information via Palmetto. It might be useful context for other folks. The letters went to the address registered in the PECOS system, which is CMS's enrollment system for providers and suppliers. So, in some cases that address wasn't up-to-date. It changed over time. And that's why some organizations may not have gotten a hard copy letter. So, if you didn't get a hard copy letter, another good thing to check is the address that's in that PECOS system. It may need a refresh.

This Q and A document was current at the time it was published or uploaded onto the web. CMS policy changes frequently so links to the source documents have been provided within the document for your reference. This Q and A document was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This Q and A document may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

4. Question: We were selected for year three, and we submitted our initial data back in November. But we were not given at the time an option for printing the data, and we didn't realize that we should have printed off a copy of what we were entering as we entered it. Is there any way that we can verify what we put in? I'm sure we put in the right thing. I just want to see it and have a copy for our records.
 - a. Answer: If you submit your NPI, if you send us an email in the mailbox, we can go ahead and take a look.
5. Question: When you're filling out that initial form online, if you did not receive that notification from CMS and you know that you've checked online, you know that you are selected to participate, what I heard was that it's okay to check off that acknowledgement box saying that we did receive the letter even though we didn't. Is that correct?
 - a. Answer: If you are the ambulance organization and you know you've been selected, then I would encourage you to go to Palmetto and enter your initial information. the reason this is really important is we want to make sure that the contacts that you designated are the contacts that you as the ambulance organization really truly want as your contacts. Some ambulance organizations will have others submit data on their behalf. But that initial submission should be done by the ambulance organization to make sure that you have the right contacts that can speak on behalf of your organization.
 - i. Question: Quite agree, yes. So just to be clear, so that it is okay to check off that acknowledgement box when you're completing that form?
 1. Answer: And if you have not received the letter and want the letter, it is also okay to reach out to your MAC. And I think Andrew gave, you know, a great tip, because all of the letters were sent to whatever address is in PECOS. So, if your PECOS address is not up-to-date, then it may not have gone to the right place, and that's probably the first place to start.
6. Question: We didn't receive an initial letter either and I just kind of found out that we were recently in reporting Year 2. I was wondering is there any option to file or request an extension on that deadline of May 31? We're a pretty small agency that would need to gather the information by that date.
 - a. Answer: Yes. Absolutely. When you go into Palmetto, you can establish your data collection period, your data collection start date within the year. So, it doesn't have to be necessarily January through December. Many people have fiscal years that are July or fiscal years that are December to December or October to October. But that reporting is based on the fiscal year that you designate. Is your fiscal year a January 1 start?

This Q and A document was current at the time it was published or uploaded onto the web. CMS policy changes frequently so links to the source documents have been provided within the document for your reference. This Q and A document was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This Q and A document may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

- i. Respond from participant: Yes. So, our reporting or our collection year would have been 2022 and our reporting year is by May 31st of this year. So, we're coming up to really just having two months to collect the data and report it. I'm kind of concerned about that timeline. I was wondering if there's any option for an extension.
 - 1. Answer: What I would suggest at this point is just send us an email in the mailbox and we can give you a bigger explanation. There is a hardship exemption that is possible that you can apply for at the end of the reporting period, but there has to be truly a significant hardship like a natural disaster, bankruptcy, a similar situation. They're very narrow and they were laid out in the Physician Fee Schedule Rule. But send us an email and we can talk offline about your options.
- 7. Question: I was just literally in the process of trying to look up our NPI organization. I believe we're probably in Year 3 or 4. I was just wanting to get clarification again. I'm looking at the slide, the timelines for reporting. So, we would be reporting our data in 2024. But our collection, does that start in the calendar year for us then? So, it would be January of this year through December, obviously and then we'd have the first five months of 2024 to report. Is that correct?
 - a. Answer: That's correct as long as your fiscal year starts on January 1.
 - i. Comment from participant: So, our fiscal year actually starts April to March.
 - 1. Answer: Okay. So, then your data collection period starts two weeks from now. And it would last through the end of March 2024. And then you'd have five months to report starting April 1, 2024, five months out from now. So, to September. Everything is scaled. In other words, it just shifts the 12-month period and then the five-month period that follows it. It just shifts it to start on April 1 instead of January 1. Just to clarify that response one bit more, I mean you do have the option to start collecting data on January 1. For organizations that have a fiscal year that starts on a date other than January 1, you still do have that choice. You can go over the calendar year or over your fiscal year. So, you have the choice of starting three months ago on January 1 or two weeks from now, April 1.
- 8. Question: What happens if we don't have all the data that the system is requesting? Like, for example, one of the questions that I ran across was how many transports we had and how many were treated on scene without transport. And I don't know if I need

This Q and A document was current at the time it was published or uploaded onto the web. CMS policy changes frequently so links to the source documents have been provided within the document for your reference. This Q and A document was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This Q and A document may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

to go through every single chart to see which were treated on scene without a transplant. So, what happens if we don't have all the data?

- a. Answer: Some specific questions in the GADCS indicate that an estimate is okay. There are some questions that CMS heard are not regularly collected information or relatively burdensome to collect. And so, when the question says you can provide an estimate, then you're free to do so. You know, make the best guess you can, but an estimate is okay. Otherwise, the data does have to be information that reflects the actual services, expenses, revenue during your 12-month data collection period. And there are some cases where, for organizations that are getting a late start and their data collection period started before they started collecting data, it may require a little creativity to completely report information. one important note, you can't actually submit and certify your response until all of the questions are answered. So, at some point, even when a question is not asking you for a specific, an estimate, or not allowing for an estimate, you will need to do something to come up with the best response you can to fill it in to proceed. If you have a specific question about that treated at the scene question, it would be great to email into the mailbox for some advice on how to tackle that.
 - i. Comment from participant: Okay. I know we can pull a good 98% of it, but there are a couple of questions that we just didn't have the answers to. We don't know how to pull that data and nor do we have the resources to go through thousands of charts to put a tally down. It was difficult.
 1. Comment from CMS: Yes. Understood and you know it's a common message and I think in many of these cases there are ways to get pretty close with a fraction of the effort and happy to discuss ways that you might tackle that question.

This Q and A document was current at the time it was published or uploaded onto the web. CMS policy changes frequently so links to the source documents have been provided within the document for your reference. This Q and A document was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This Q and A document may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations, and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.