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CENTER FOR BENEFICIARY CHOICES

Date: March 29, 2006

To: All HPMS Users

From: Gary Bailey, Deputy Director, Center for Beneficiary Choices

Subject: IMPORTANT – Scheduled HPMS Maintenance and the Resulting Change to the Contract Year 2007 Bid Submission Tools Release Date

In order to improve systems performance for the upcoming Contract Year 2007 application, formulary, and bid season, CMS has taken steps to upgrade the HPMS production web server and replace the current HPMS production database server with more powerful hardware. Although CMS had fully planned to implement these HPMS infrastructure changes prior to the start of the 2007 season, the hardware delivery was unexpectedly delayed due to a significantly increased demand as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

After considering all available options, CMS has determined that the HPMS infrastructure changes must be implemented during the weekend of April 7, 2006. Because of the nature of these changes, CMS must take HPMS production offline during the maintenance window. This timetable schedules the system downtime for as early as possible in the 2007 season, which will maximize the benefits of the performance improvements and minimize the amount of disruption to both plan and CMS activities.

In order to implement these critical infrastructure changes, HPMS production will be taken offline from 8:00 p.m. ET on Friday, April 7, 2006 until 8:00 a.m. ET on Monday, April 10, 2006.

This upgrade schedule has a direct impact on the release date for the 2007 Bid Pricing Tool (BPT), Plan Benefit Package (PBP), plan creation module, and corresponding technical instructions. Consequently, CMS has decided to delay the release of these products until Monday, April 10, 2006. CMS will make every effort to release these 2007 products as quickly as possible on this date.

We apologize for any inconvenience resulting from these activities. If you have questions about this memo, please contact the HPMS Help Desk at either 1-800-220-2028 or hpms@cms.hhs.gov. Thank you.