

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Center for Beneficiary Services  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S3-16-16  
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



## MEDICARE PLAN PAYMENT GROUP

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**DATE:** March 23, 2007

**TO:** All Prospective and Current Medicare Advantage and Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MA-PD) Plans, Part D Plans (PDPs), Cost-Based Organizations and Demonstrations

**FROM:** Thomas Hutchinson /s/  
Director

**SUBJECT:** Designation of Individuals Authorized Access to CMS Computer Services (IACS) Plan User Approver/External Point of Contact (EPOC) -ACTION

This letter describes the requirements and process for organizations to establish the Plan approver for granting access to their data in CMS systems. In an effort to manage access to the systems that support the Medicare Modernization Act, CMS is providing Plans with the ability to register and approve their own Plan users. Individuals Authorized Access to CMS Computer Services (IACS), provides Plan users with an Internet accessible application to self-register for access to CMS MMA systems or become a Plan approver of end users. This replaces the previous paper-based Enterprise Users Access system (EUA). Current users of the Health Plan Management System (HPMS) may still be required to use EUA to certify existing user Ids.

Organizations are required to designate approvers for each contract that serve as the approving official for the Plan's end users seeking access to CMS systems. This person (or persons) is referred to as the External Point of Contact, or EPOC. After providing preliminary information to CMS via a hardcopy letter (the details of which are provided below), each EPOC will self-register for the appropriate contract numbers using IACS. Once approved by CMS, each EPOC will have the ability and responsibility to approve or reject the registration of the Plan's end users. This includes approval of subcontractor users performing work under each contract number associated with the EPOC.

A portion of the EPOC's capability is considered to be a system administrator function. CMS security policy requires separation of duties between system administrators and users; therefore **EPOCs cannot be end users of CMS systems.** Any individual that registers as an EPOC will not be granted access to CMS systems as an end user. We recommend that the EPOC be a responsible management officer of your organization such as a manager or supervisor of your IT or Security organization.

Step one of the EPOC registration process is for plans to submit a letter to CMS identifying and appointing the EPOC for the plan and providing identifying information and the contract number(s) they are associated with. This letter will be used by CMS; Division of Payment Operations to verify the identity of EPOCs that self-register, therefore, CMS must be in receipt of this letter before your EPOC(s) will be approved.

The EPOC designation letter must be typed on organizational letterhead and signed by a responsible officer of the organization. It must contain the following:

- Name, title, mailing address, e-mail address and telephone number of the company official signing the letter identifying the EPOC(s) for your plan;
- For each EPOC:
  - o Full name (last, first, middle)
  - o Mailing address
  - o Telephone number
  - o E-mail address
  - o Contract number(s) the EPOC will approve users for (list ALL contract numbers this EPOC will approve users to work under)

An organization may submit one letter for all contract numbers, and may designate up to two EPOCs for the same, or different, contract numbers for your organization.

A hard copy of this letter, with an original signature from the company official that is identifying the EPOCs for your plan/organization, should be mailed to:

**The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Center for Beneficiary Choices  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop, C1-05-17  
Baltimore, MD 21244**

CMS will not confirm the receipt of the EPOC designation letter.

The second step of the EPOC registration process is for each EPOC to complete their registration in IACS. This step can be completed once the letter has been sent to CMS. It is important to note that end users cannot register and be approved until the EPOC is established in IACS, making the EPOC registration a critical path task.

During the registration process, EPOCs should provide all contract numbers for which they will approve end users; however additional contracts can be added at a later time as needed. EPOCs must provide an individual's email address that is specific to their organization, not a publicly available email account such as Yahoo or Hotmail.

Please note that Plans using third party entities to process their MMA data still need to designate and register an EPOC to approve subcontractor users. Plans should work closely with their subcontractors to identify users that will need to be granted access to CMS systems and establish procedures for doing so.

Once the EPOC registration is submitted in IACS, it will proceed through CMS' approval process. This can take 48-72 hours to complete. Once the registration is approved, the EPOC will receive an e-mail containing the CMS IACS user-ID and temporary password, along with instructions for changing the password. Additional instructions regarding EPOC and end user registration is available in the IACS User Guide on the internet at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MMAHelp/Downloads/IACSUserGuideV3.pdf> or by calling MMAHelp at

1-800-927-8069.

Any and all subsequent changes, additions or deletions to a Plan's EPOC designation requires that the Plan follow the above instructions and provide CMS with a new letter which clearly states what the changes/deletions are. The new EPOC can then proceed to self-register or add contracts to their registration in IACS. EPOCs that wish to remove contracts from their registration may also do this on their own; EPOCs cannot change their own email address and should contact the MMAHelp Desk for assistance with this modification. EPOC deletions should also be directed to MMAHelp.

Please contact the MMA Helpdesk with any questions you may have regarding this request. The MMA Helpdesk may be contacted by telephone at 1-800-927-8069 or by e-mail at [MMAHelp@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:MMAHelp@cms.hhs.gov).

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.