



CENTER FOR MEDICARE

TO: All Medicare Advantage Organizations, Prescription Drug Plan Sponsors and Medicare-Medicaid Plans

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SUBJECT: Updates on COVAX Data Sharing Project

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For Calendar Years 2020 and 2021, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will process all claims for payment for COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX) administration for the vast majority of Medicare beneficiaries through the original fee-for-service Medicare program. This includes claims for COVAX administration for Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage (MA) Plans (including Local Coordinated Care Plans (CCPs), and Regional CCPs as well as other plan types), Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs) and Medicare-Medicaid Plans (MMPs), collectively referred to in this memorandum as “plans.” On January 7, 2021, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a memorandum, “Access to COVID-19 Vaccine Data for Parts C & D Enrollees,” announcing a process by which such plans could request certain Covid-19 vaccine (COVAX) data from CMS regarding their enrollees. This memo provides updates on the COVAX data sharing project and includes responses to technical questions posed by participating plans.

Phase 1 Update

The initial phase of the COVAX data sharing project established a new ABII-COVAX Web Portal (ABII-COVAX) hosted by CMS contractor Acumen, LLC (Acumen). The ABII-COVAX successfully launched on January 12, 2021 as scheduled and the vast majority of plans¹ have requested access to COVAX data. We understand that many of these plans are developing strategies to help ensure their enrollees receive vaccinations as soon as they are available to them. Plans that require assistance with the user authorization process can contact Acumen at COVAX-Support@acumenllc.com.

¹ 85% of plans have requested access as of February 18, 2021.

Early Launch of Phase 2

Plans will be able to receive the most timely vaccine information possible by receiving COVAX pharmacy claims data directly from CMS' contractor, RelayHealth. Although initially scheduled to begin **April 15, 2021**, RelayHealth now will be able to send COVAX data directly to Part D plans beginning **March 16, 2021**. RelayHealth will send pharmacy-provided COVAX claims data using the National Council for Prescription Drug Plans (NCPDP) B transaction format directly to plans that are capable of receiving that information. Plans should indicate their readiness to receive these data via B transactions by sending an email to TBTSupport@relayhealth.com with the word "COVAX" in the subject line, and by including the plan's contract ID and the date when they are able to accept the B transactions in the email.

Technical Updates

Appearance of Redundant Data. CMS' goal is to provide plans with the most current vaccine data available. COVAX data come directly from pharmacies and from the Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) before claims have been processed for payment. CMS cannot immediately determine which date of service is accurate when the raw pharmacy and MAC data show different dates of service for a vaccine and, therefore, we include both records on the COVAX report. The duplicates will be merged once the claim has been paid. Plans should not infer irregularities in claims billing or payment because the data do not represent paid claims data.

Claims Submission Notes for Pharmacies and Part D Plans. The NCPDP Emergency Task Force has issued updated technical notes for pharmacies and plans to follow for Phase 2 of the COVAX data sharing project. A link to the COVAX claims submission guidance and answers to frequently asked questions are available at https://ncpdp.org/NCPDP/media/pdf/Resources/Emergency_Preparedness.pdf

Questions about this memorandum may be sent to PartD_COB@cms.hhs.gov, about ABII to COVAX-Support@acumenllc.com, and about the Transaction Facilitator Process to TBTSupport@relayhealth.com.