

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Questions and Answers
Open Door Forum: SNF/LTC Open Door Forum
Thursday, October 6, 2022

1. Question: I just have two questions. First of all, with the release of MDS 3.0 version 1.18.11, can you give us some indication as to when we'll begin to receive resources related to the major changes that have occurred to that particular document with the comprehensive dataset that's been put out, like the RAI manual or updated quality measure specifications, especially related to the elimination of section GG. Also, the cost specifications and the five-star ratings and so forth, everything that'll be affected pretty much by the elimination of section G, some guidance on that, when we can expect that. And then also just a follow-up to the comments that Ellen made just a minute ago related to iQIES. The initial announcements indicated that general onboarding for nursing home and swing bed hospital staff would begin November 15th and going forward so with the provider security officer onboard. Is there a deadline for when we need to have our general onboarding, those that would be submitting MDSs and so forth?
 - a. Answer: Before you submit assessments in, when we open up iQIES to MDS, and that date is still to be determined, but we are hoping for early 2023. It's not going to be January, I will tell you that. Most likely sometime in March, but that's still a little bit flexible at this point. However, staff and vendor communities, if you require manual process for your identification portion of the onboarding process, that can take several weeks. We highly recommend that you don't wait that long. Your account will not be frozen or anything if you haven't used it. There's nothing to do right now in iQIES. You're okay in that sense. You're not going to have to reset your password initially. The sooner you obtain your user ID, the better off you are. I can address some of the other questions. As we stated when we released the draft NC items set in September, we anticipate releasing the other version 1.1 8.11 draft item sets before the end of the year. And at that time when we release those, we will also plan to update the item set change history so that you're able to see that. In terms of the manual release, we don't typically release the manual till, you know, later in the process. So, I'm anticipating it will be sometime in the second quarter of 2023. The other question you had was about the G to GG work on the quality measures. I do know that that work is ongoing, and I don't have a timeline for the release of that information, but it will certainly be released well in advance of when it becomes effective.
 - i. Question: Just the question I think a lot of us have is surrounding the STRIVE study that risk adjusts or acuity adjusts for staffing on the five-

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star with all the staffing changes now. The five-star, how will that be affected? Or maybe you don't know the answer to that, but resources to be able to understand the G to GG possible inflections on that, or indications for how the STRIVE study data under the RUG system might be affected by the change from G to GG.

1. Answer: We do know our [measure people] are looking at this. But I would say, they're adjusting, is not going to be RUG because we're not going to have that.
 - a. Comment from caller: Sure. I think the encouragement to all, just I think from the provider community is, the sooner, the better, as far as getting this information, knowing so many big changes and understanding that flow of data and how that's going to work before we get started, will be helpful.
 - i. Comment from CMS: Yes. And we want to get the information out to you as soon as possible, but we also want to make sure it's as error-free as possible also.
2. Question: Thank you for providing the links in the agenda. That's very helpful. My question is; however, I'd like to ask about the drop-dead date for the new conversion for the MDS data going to, I believe, it's called iQIES?
 - a. Answer: Can you clarify, because there's no conversion of data. It's still an XML file as it is today. It would be the same file as today. So, it's just, you're going - instead of going to QIES, you're going to be going to iQIES. It will look a little bit different than what QIES looks like when you go to upload your file, you press a button, and it asks you what files you want to load and that's what you do.
 - i. Question: Can we still upload as frequently as we like?
 1. Answer: Yes, we have not changed anything like that.
3. Question: Two questions, one on the iQIES. For those already permissioned in the system, do they need to be repermissioned? And then separately for Heidi, when you covered the 10/26 Care Compare update, if you would please restate those dates for the timeframes for the MDS claims and HAI measure.
 - a. Answer: On the October refresh, the assessment data submitted by SNFs, so the assessments will be quarter one 2021, through quarter four 2021. The data for claims-based measures, which are updated annually with this refresh, will be quarter three 2019 to quarter four 2019. And then we will skip over quarter one and quarter two 2020, because those were exempted due to the COVID-19 PHE. So, this claims date will be, again, quarter three and four of 2019 and quarter three 2020, through quarter four of - through quarter two of 2021. The SNF HAI

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healthcare-associated infections requiring hospitalization measure, this is a one-year measure, claims-based measure. So, this measure will just display quarter four 2020, through quarter three 2021. And when we release our announcement, as we often do, alerting providers to the availability of this refresh, all those dates are, again, contained in that messaging. So, you don't have to remember. And then finally, I'm sorry, the CDC COVID-19 vaccination coverage, the SNF QRP version will reflect data submitted for quarter four 2021.

- i. Question: And then I just had the question on those already permissioned in iQIES, if they need to repermission.
 1. Question from CMS: So, what do you mean by permission? You mean you have a role like with Oasis, and now you want one with MDS?
 - a. Answer: I think I'm referring to the correct system. Within iQIES, is that where we access ePOC and Payroll Based Journal, and CASPER reporting?
 - i. Question back to caller: Are you a provider?
 1. Answer: Yes.
 - a. Answer to caller: Okay. With iQIES, if you look at the links, there's the HARP onboarding or account training video. You'll want to go there, because you have to start with a HARP account. So, you need a whole new user ID to access iQIES. Your QIES user ID will not carry over to iQIES. We have a new process with regards to ensuring people are who they say they are, and that is a CMS requirement for all our systems. So, if you have a QIES user ID, you will have to go through the new process.
 - b. If you already have an iQIES user account, you may need to go in and update your role, your access. So, there are some people who have multiple types of providers. So, they have an IRF and a nursing home, and they'll be submitting for both, while

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our earth providers are already associated with our iQIES, and they have user IDs. So, they would just have to go in and update their role.

4. Question: I just had a couple of questions and it's around iQIES. So, I had heard that there is going to be a vendor call around the iQIES transition, and I was wondering if you knew the date for that. And then I also had a question, will there be any kind of a sandbox or test environment that vendors can use as they prepare for this transition? Some vendors do submit on behalf of customers.
 - a. Answer: We do not have a date for the vendor call. Our goal is before November 15th, there will not be a sandbox. As I mentioned earlier, you'll be using the same data specs that are in existence today. And so, it's still an XML file if you upload, and that process is basically the same. It will look different because it's not QIES. It's now iQIES. There, you can test with the VUT. We still have the VUT that applies.
 - i. Comment from caller: Right. So, yes. And I guess just to kind of clarify where I'm coming from, so it's not really the XML file per se that we need specifications for, or want to understand, but because we do automate this process for our clients, because it is a new Web site and a new look and feel, then we have to account for that process and those changes to, you know, the new Web site and how we handle the automated process. And so, I guess that's where we're really looking for some type of a sandbox environment to where we could submit assessments prior to going live and having to do it with, you know, real life PHI. So, just wanted to, I guess, throw that out there as kind of the rationale for the ask.
 1. Comment from CMS: What I suggest is when we request questions for the vendor call, that you submit that question.
5. Question: This has to do with the (SOM) changes for October 24th. Will there be another release of that? The one we - that I have is the advance copy from two plus months ago when it was published in the Federal Register. Will there be something else coming out, or will we use that to prepare to be in compliance?
 - a. Answer: There will be a final copy of the (SOM) published either before or on October 24th. We don't have an exact date, but it will come out. We are not anticipating changes, other than maybe minor technical edits, but we are not anticipating any large changes to that. So, yes, there will be a final version posted in the coming weeks.
 - i. Question: Will there be any anticipated changes to the CEPs, other than what was already put out with the few of them?

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1. Answer: I do not have information on whether there will be any changes to the pathways at this time, but they will also be released sometime between now and October 24th.
6. Question: Is there a specific link that gives us direction of how to proceed with the new - getting the new user ID for submitting MDSs?
 - a. Answer: Yes. You want us start with the HARP account training video. You'll need to obtain a HARP account, and then once you have that, you can submit your request for your user role. Now, if you are the provider security official, that is approved by CMS, and that person needs to be in place prior to any other roles being requested. The other roles being requested are approved by your security official, not by CMS, because CMS does not know the staff.
 - i. Question: When you say provider personnel, I'm the MDS coordinator/manager, would that be a different person from me, or would that be me?
 1. Answer: It could be you. That's a business decision, but we want it to be somebody associated with the provider. Now, we also recommend that you have more than one provider security official because people go on vacation.
7. Question: Any indication as to when the technical users guide will come out for five-star if it changes October? Primarily just interested in knowing the cut point changes and what those look like. Thank you.
 - a. Answer: We do not have that information yet, and we will let the provider community know as soon as we do.
8. Question: Regarding vendors and provider security official role, what we had happen with our company is, the vendor reached out to CMS and received provider security official access without our permission. So, it was a little bit odd. I'm confused. Are they supposed to be at that level, or is there a different level for vendors?
 - a. Answer: Correct. We did learn about that late last week, and that's why I made the announcement that it should not be the vendor who should be requesting that role, because we do not know who providers use as their vendor, if they use a vendor. And that's why we do request that. That was a mistake on our end. So, if you do not want that your vendor to be your provider - your second provider security official, because you're allowed to have more than one security official, then you will need your vendor to either remove his or her role completely, and then you apply, or you have the vendor "security official," approve a person security official role, and then you would delete that vendor's role.
 - i. Question: What is the proper level for a vendor besides provider security official? What's the right access do you - can you advise on that?

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1. Answer: I cannot. I would suggest you look at the role matrix to figure out the best role for that person. And I don't know that by heart, so I apologize for that, but there are several different roles that your vendor could use. Like they may just do submissions for you, or they may also look at some reports for you. So, if you look at the role matrix, hopefully, that will assist you with your decision.

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