

Extraordinary Circumstances Extension / Exception (ECE) due to Hurricane Matthew

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) intends to grant quality reporting data submission and validation exceptions to Medicare providers in several care settings adversely affected by the devastating impact of Hurricane Matthew, including post-acute care settings such as Long-Term Care Hospitals (LTCHs), Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities (IRFs), Hospice, and Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs). For the specified reporting quarter(s), as indicated in this communication, affected providers will not be required to submit quality measure data to meet submission requirements.

CMS is exercising its authority to grant exceptions for data submission requirements for the several quality reporting programs for providers located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-designated “major disaster” counties of Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina listed below:

GEORGIA	FLORIDA	NORTH CAROLINA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brantley County • Bryan County • Bulloch County • Camden County • Chatham County • Effingham County • Glynn County • Liberty County • Long County • McIntosh County • Pierce County • Screven County • Tattnall County • Toombs County • Wayne County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brevard County • Clay County • Duval County • Flagler County • Indian River County • Martin County • Nassau County • Putnam County • St. Johns County • St. Lucie County • Volusia County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaufort County • Bertie County • Bladen County • Brunswick County • Camden County • Carteret County • Chowan County
SOUTH CAROLINA		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allendale County • Bamberg County • Barnwell County • Beaufort County • Berkeley County • Charleston County • Colleton County • Columbus County • Craven County • Cumberland County • Currituck County • Dare County • Duplin County • Edgecombe County • Gates County • Greene County • Harnett County • Hoke County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyde County • Johnston County • Jones County • Lenoir County • Martin County • Nash County • New Hanover County • Onslow County • Pamlico County • Pasquotank County • Pender County • Perquimans County • Pitt County • Robeson County • Sampson County • Tyrrell County • Washington County • Wayne County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson County • Darlington County • Dillon County • Dorchester County • Florence County • Georgetown County • Hampton County • Horry County • Jasper County • Lee County • Marion County • Orangeburg County • Sumter County • Williamsburg County

CMS is issuing exemptions for several quality reporting data submission requirements because of possible damage to facilities and/or systems resulting in their inability to gather or submit data, as well as the need to prioritize immediate resources for direct patient care.

Hospice QRP Exemptions

CMS has granted a blanket exemption for all Hospice providers in the designated counties for the following Hospice QRP data submission requirements, including required quality data submitted via the Hospice Item Set (HIS):

- Third Quarter 2016 (July 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016) for February 15, 2017, submission deadline
- Fourth Quarter 2016 (October 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016) for May 15, 2017, submission deadline

While you can continue to submit quality data to CMS, any data submissions for the above-listed exempt CY 2016 quarters will not be considered when determining compliance related to the FY 2018 reporting requirements for your Hospice. That is, you will not be held accountable for data collected and submitted during the above identified 2016 quarters. We would like to also note that this exemption from quality reporting requirements for the Hospice QRP may impact the minimum case threshold counts for calculation of quality metrics, in which case CMS would suppress the applicable data on the Hospice Compare site, when quality measure target periods that include Q3 and/or Q4 2016 data are calculated and posted.

IRF QRP Exemptions

CMS has granted a blanket exemption for all IRFs in the designated counties for the following IRF QRP data submission requirements, including required quality data submitted via the IRF Patient Assessment Instrument (PAI), as well as Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI) data submitted via the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN):

- Third Quarter 2016 (July 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016) for February 15, 2017, submission deadline
- Fourth Quarter 2016 (October 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016) for May 15, 2017, submission deadline

Please note that this exemption applies to quality data only, and has no effect on the submission of the IRF-PAI for payment purposes. While you can continue to submit quality data to CMS, any data submissions for the above-listed exempt CY 2016 quarters will not be considered when determining compliance related to the FY 2018 reporting requirements for your IRF. That is, you will not be held accountable for data collected and submitted during the above identified 2016 quarters. We would like to also note that this exemption from quality reporting requirements for the IRF QRP may impact the minimum case threshold counts for calculation of quality metrics, in which case CMS would suppress the applicable data on the IRF Compare site, when quality measure target periods that include Q3 and/or Q4 2016 data are calculated and posted.

LTCH QRP Exemptions

CMS has granted a blanket exemption for all LTCHs in the designated counties for the following LTCH QRP data submission requirements, including required quality data submitted via the LTCH CARE Data Set, as well as Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI) data submitted via the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN):

- Third Quarter 2016 (July 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016) for February 15, 2017, submission deadline
- Fourth Quarter 2016 (October 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016) for May 15, 2017, submission deadline

While you can continue to submit quality data to CMS, any data submissions for the above-listed exempt CY 2016 quarters will not be considered when determining compliance related to the FY 2018 reporting requirements for your LTCH. That is, you will not be held accountable for data collected and submitted during the above identified 2016 quarters. We would like to also note that this exemption from quality reporting requirements for the LTCH QRP may impact the minimum case threshold counts for calculation of quality metrics, in which case CMS would suppress the applicable data on the LTCH Compare site, when quality measure target periods that include Q3 and/or Q4 2016 data are calculated and posted.

SNF QRP Exemptions

CMS has granted a blanket exemption for all SNFs in the designated counties for the following SNF QRP data submission requirements, including required quality data submitted via the Minimum Data Set (MDS):

- Fourth Quarter 2016 (October 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016) for May 15, 2017, submission deadline for FY 2018 APU Determination
-

Please note that this exemption applies to quality data only, that is data used for the SNF Quality Reporting Program and to determine APU compliance and has no effect on the submission of the MDS for payment or other required purposes. While you can continue to submit quality data to CMS, any data submissions for the above-listed exempt CY 2016 quarters(s) will not be considered when determining compliance related to the FY 2018 reporting requirements for your SNF. That is, you will not be held accountable for data collected and submitted during the above identified 2016 quarters. We would like to also note that this exemption from quality reporting requirements for the SNF QRP may impact the minimum case threshold counts for calculation of quality metrics, in which case CMS would suppress the applicable data on the SNF Compare site, when quality measure target periods that include Q4 2016 data are calculated and posted.

Please note that Medicare providers located outside of the counties covered under this memo in need of an extension or exemption from program requirements are required to follow one of the following submission processes:

- **Hospice QRP:** [Hospice Quality Reporting Exception & Extension](#) webpage or email questions to HospiceQRPreconsiderations@cms.hhs.gov
- **IRF QRP:** [IRF Quality Reporting Reconsideration and Exception & Extension](#) webpage or email questions to IRFQRPreconsiderations@cms.hhs.gov
- **LTCH QRP:** [LTCH Quality Reporting Reconsideration and Exception & Extension](#) webpage or email questions to LTCHQRPreconsiderations@cms.hhs.gov
- **SNF QRP:** [SNF Quality Reporting Reconsideration and Exception & Extension](#) webpage or email questions to SNFQRPreconsiderations@cms.hhs.gov