

Payroll Based Journal (PBJ) – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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PBJ Data Specification Questions:

- 1. Q.** I attended the software developer call on May 6. It was stated that the only options organizations would have to upload information is manual entry or upload an XML file. I've been speaking with a few other nursing homes who are stating there are preferred vendors that are running a pilot for automatic integration with the system. Have any of the uploading requirements changed, or are there going to be options for automatic integration?

A. Nothing has changed in regards to our data submission process. The PBJ system will only allow for XML file format and manual data entry submission at this time. We do not allow for automation or scripting of submissions.

2. **Q.** While reviewing the XML sample file 'nhpbj_1_00_0.xml,' you've provided as documentation we had a couple questions. In the XML example in the Staffing section you show an employeeId of EM232323, but an entry for EM232323 cannot be found in the Employee section. How can this be a valid condition? Please elaborate.

A. In this sample, there must be the assumption that EM232323 is already in the database. This version of PBJ differs from the pilot in that employees are remembered across quarters and do not need to be provided with every submission, only when there are changes to the employee.

3. **Q.** Back in December of 2012 we submitted a CSV file with equivalent data. At that time we had a Trailer row. I did not see anything resembling a Trailer row in the XML example. Our submission in 2012 contained multiple facilities in the same file, which will not be the case in the XML format. Is that perhaps why a Trailer row was defined in the CSV format but not in the XML? Please explain.

A. Correct, the XML will only allow one fac id/state code per XML and there is not a need for a trailer row.

4. **Q.** Section processing control: Process Type is a merge how would the payroll vendor decide if the Employee record for staffing hours or census data will be replace or merge?

A. If "processType" is set to the value "replace", then all the data for that specific section (census or staffing) for the specified quarter will be removed from the active database, and then replaced with the data submitted in the file. If "processType" is set to the value "merge", then the data within that section will be processed as follows: Staffing Hours data will be matched on the employeeId and date. If data exists for a specific day/employeeId combination, it will be overwritten; otherwise the data for that day is simply added. Census data will be matched on the month end date. If data exists for a specific month end date, it will be overwritten; otherwise the data for that day is simply added.

5. **Q.** Regarding the XML document, it seems that for the staff hours node there seems to be only one employee ID per level per node. Is that correct?
- A.** Yes, within the date node the employee ID has the date node inside of it so the date repeats for each employee and then the employee can retag/repeat to provide for multiple employees. The workday is with the employee and then the staffing hours, the actual job title and hours are inside of that. Staff hours are strictly for one employee, per node.
6. **Q.** Regarding Merge/Replace, if we're adding employees or entities that had not been added before for specific weeks or facilities, what would be a new add, and would I use merge or replace if I'm adding new data?
- A.** If you are adding new data and don't want to wipe out everything for your entire quarter, unless you are providing the information in the XML, you would want to use a merge. If you do a replace, you have to do everything for that quarter. If you add one new thing and do a replace it will wipe out everything for the entire quarter. Merge is typically the safer method regarding existing data, unless you submit every piece of information every single time in the XML.
7. **Q.** Would there be somewhere you can download the XML file or will software companies have to build them for each facility?
- A.** If you are using a software developer or vendor, they could produce the XML for you or the other option is manual entry online.
8. **Q.** Inside of the hours reporting you can report based on two job title codes but down in the staff hours object, the actual employee object there is only one location.
- A.** The Job Title Code can only be entered in the Staffing Hours record and yes, multiple job codes can be assigned to one employee. There is no location in the Employee object for Job Title Code.

- 9. Q.** I thought we would be submitting only one XML file to CMS for each facility. What are the CSV and HTML files that appear in the data spec files?
- A.** The PBJ system only allows the XML format for electronic submission and yes, only one facility is allowed per XML file. The CSV and HTML files are included for informational purposes only. The CSV (Comma Separated Value) files are provided so that a vendor could import the item names and their associated range of valid values into a database for use with a vendor application. Vendors could also accomplish that directly from the Access database if they have Microsoft Office. The HTML files are included to allow the user to navigate the items and edits in the specifications using hyperlinks, as opposed to scrolling through the PDFs. Neither the CSV format nor the HTML formats are allowed for submission – only XML files will be accepted.
- 10. Q.** Can CMS provide recommendations for converting data in other formats (i.e. Excel) to XML?
- A.** The data specifications include examples in the XML format only. Our developers do not use other file types to generate XML, so we cannot recommend any method since we cannot verify how well they will work.
- 11. Q.** Are we uploading the XML or using web services?
- A.** You will create a ZIP file from one or more XML files and then the ZIP file will be uploaded.
- 12. Q.** Can you tell me some of the tools used to create the XML if we did this in-house?
- A.** We cannot endorse or recommend a specific tool to create the XML.
- 13. Q.** Are you able to participate in the pilot if you are ready to submit your exempt hours, but you are not ready to submit your non-exempt hours?
- A.** Yes, you are able to participate in the pilot in the above circumstance.
- 14. Q.** Are the XSD files available for download for the developers?
- A.** Yes, they come in the specifications package.
- 15. Q.** Is the Labor Category field used in the XML file at all? How will the Labor Category information be used?
- A.** No, the Labor Category field is not used at all in the XML file. It is used for the manual data entry screens and for administrative purposes. The required information on the XML file is the job title code.

- 16. Q.** How do you convert the ADP file into an XML?
- A.** Refer to module 4 or the link below for information on the file submission process and the data specifications.
<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityInits/Staffing-Data-Submission-PBJ.html>
- 17. Q.** The XSD file that was originally posted only has the version 1.00 on it. With the Errata data that number has changed. Should we manually change that in our XSD file, and are we generating a file with that number in it? Will there be an issue if we submit it or do we need the new XSD file?
- A.** You can change the file spec value. You should look at the Errata to see what additional requirement changes are needed.
- 18. Q.** We are creating the XML file, but we only have the job description and the job title code. Should I make another column for hours for the month or hours for the week for each person with the names of the employees in my file?
- A.** In order to ensure that you are creating your XML file properly, you should follow the data specs and there are examples, both in the overview and also there is a separate one with the XML and XSD zip. There is also a separate one in with the XML and XSD zip.
- 19. Q.** On the XML format, are you able to provide monthly hours instead of hours by day for each employee?
- A.** Hours should be provided by day for each employee.
- 20. Q.** In the original specification there was a work type code. If that is in the XML, will that be rejected or ignored?
- A.** Yes, the work type code is no longer required, but it is optional. If you put it in the XML, it won't reject the file. The field is no longer within the PBJ system.
- 21. Q.** On the XML file examples, does everything on the example have to be on the report coming from the payroll vendor?
- A.** The data specifications are defined; everything has to be on your file.

- 22. Q.** The spec on page 3 of staffing refers to hours. If it is hours paid, we need a definition of what that means. Is it productive hours or non-productive hours?
A. The hours that individuals are paid to work onsite are to be what is reported. Please refer to the policy manual and FAQs. Please submit any follow-up questions to nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.
- 23. Q.** If we have a zip file that has an XML file for multiple facilities when we do the upload, is it possible to do the upload for just one of those XML files, or do all of the files in the zip get uploaded at the same time?
A. If you have a zip file that contains multiple XML files in different facilities, essentially whatever you have in the zip file is going to be processed. Everything in the zip file is going to be processed.
- 24. Q.** How large are zip files able to be when it's uploaded?
A. 5 MB.
- 25. Q.** What do you advise on with the XML submission: daily, monthly, or weekly?
A. This is the Nursing Home's decision. It all depends on how it will work best for your nursing home.
- 26. Q.** Are programmers available to work with or answer questions?
A. No, our programmers are not available directly for questions. Please continue to send questions to the technical issue mailbox provided in the agenda and we will triage them accordingly.

PBJ Systems Questions:

- 27. Q.** What versions of IE are supported?
A. PBJ will support IE 10 and 11 in non-compatibility modes.
- 28. Q.** Are there other requirements to upload such as FLASH? If so, what version?
A. No other requirements.
- 29. Q.** Are any plug-ins required to submit the XML file?
A. No plugins required.
- 30. Q.** How is the data protected once it is uploaded on the CMS website?
A. The files are stored in a secure database.

- 31. Q.** What is the max size of the zip file compressed?
A. 5MB
- 32. Q.** With the limitation of 5 MB, are we going to be able to upload multiple files for that same facility, or are we going to have to break it down if it goes over 5 MB? Can the file size limit be increased?
A. You can submit multiple ZIP files if the ZIP file ends up being over 5 MB. XML files compress well so we don't see the 5 MB limit being an issue, but you can certainly submit multiple ZIP files if you need to. You can also submit multiple facilities within a single ZIP file. A 5 MB file is a large file so we're not sure, at this point, if people will be exceeding it, we will monitor and determine what we might need to do in the future.
- 33. Q.** Does CMS provide for a secure transfer, such as HTTPS?
A. All of the communication is done over HTTPS including file uploads.
- 34. Q.** Would CMS allow for data encryption?
A. Encryption is performed over HTTPS.
- 35. Q.** Has the technical team conducted any type of simulation to determine the amount of time or level of effort required for a typical facility, say with 100-120 employees, to manually load their data for a quarter and to assess the level of effort necessary for a manual interaction with the system as opposed to an electronic upload?
A. We have conducted some internal analysis regarding this topic; however, it will largely depend on the facility. We encourage all facilities to participate early in the voluntary period to prepare their systems and processes for the Mandatory Period. The employees you enter during the Voluntary Period will be retained for the Mandatory Period, unless you delete them. Please submit any follow-up questions to nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.

PBJ Training Questions:

- 36. Q.** Are you going to be offering additional trainings?
A. CMS has WebEx trainings with detailed step by step directions to help you figure out how to submit XML files or perform manual data entry. -PBJ Training Modules for the CASPER Reporting and PBJ systems are available, on QTSO e-University; select the PBJ option (<https://www.qtso.com/webex/qiesclasses.php>).

37. Q. I'm neither a software developer nor a vendor, can you give me some guidance as to when you're first looking at doing this, what should I look at?

A. Your best resource for getting information is to go to the website listed below. It has all the guidance, policy information as well as the specifications you would need to submit an XML. These websites are listed in the Agenda.

<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityInits/Staffing-Data-Submission-PBJ.html>

38. Q. What is the most time effective way to reach the site?

A. Once you have a CMSnet login account, you can then register for a QIES login account. Then you are able to reach the website. Please refer to the training modules.

39. Q. What is the difference between Merge/Replace?

A. The "processType" within the <staffingHours> and <census> tags are used to control how the data within these sections will be processed. There are two **possible** values for "processType": "merge" and "replace".

If "processType" is set to the value "replace", then all the data for that specific section (census or staffing) for the specified quarter will be removed from the active database, and then replaced with the data submitted in the file.

If "processType" is set to the value "merge", then the data within that section will be processed as follows:

- a. Staffing Hours data will be matched on the employeeId and date. If data exists for a specific day/employeeId combination, it will be overwritten; otherwise the data for that day is simply added.
- b. Census data will be matched on the month end date. If data exists for a specific month end date, it will be overwritten; otherwise the data for that day is simply added.

There are a lot of merge/replace scenarios in the PBJ Provider User guide.

40. Q. In the policy manual are we able to find the definition for hours paid.

A. Yes you will be able to find what hours should be reported related to hours paid in the policy manual. Also there is a FAQ on hours paid versus hours if you have more questions. Lastly, in the important resources section under PBJ policy questions if you still have a question, you are able to submit it to the policy mailbox: nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.

41. Q. Would you clarify the staffing hour requirement? Is that ‘hours worked’ or ‘hours paid’?

A. Hours paid is the correct answer. Please submit any follow-up questions to nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.

PBJ Registration Questions:

42. Q. When logging into the website to upload a file, are first time user’s setup with a unique or generic login? If another user replaces an existing user, what is process?

A. User IDs will be unique and provided thru the PBJ registration process. Registration training will be provided via WebEx recordings and user manuals.

43. Q. Is the CMSNet User ID a new ID for each long term care facility?

A. Existing CMSNet user ID’s can be used to register for PBJ access. If you don’t have a CMSNet ID you will need to register for one.

44. Q. Corporations have to register via manual forms, where can the form be found?

A. It is located on the QTSO.com website along with other provider types.

45. Q. What provider types should a user select for registration?

A. Providers should utilize MDS for CMSNet and PBJ for QIES.

46. Q. I registered for CMSNet, but I cannot access the link to obtain a PBJ QIES Provider ID.

A. Please make sure you are logged in to CMSNet before you try to access the link.

PBJ Submission Questions:

47. Q. Would the SNF be able to upload two electronic files for the payroll information that is required?

Rationale: Our Rehab Dept. is contracted staff. They are not directly listed in our facilities’ payroll system. They have their own payroll system. Do both reports have to be merged somehow before they are uploaded?

A. You will be able to submit multiple XML files. The files will match on the FAC ID and State Code supplied in the header and merge in the database.

- 48. Q.** Does the voluntary reporting date of October 1 mean that the first quarter to be reported voluntarily is October 1, 2015-December 31, 2015, with the first voluntary submission to the PBJ system due by February 14, 2016?
- A.** Yes, but you could start submitting Oct 1, 2015.
- 49. Q.** Does the required reporting date of July 1, 2016 mean that the first quarter that is to be reported mandatorily is July 1, 2016-September 30, 2016, with the first mandatory submission to the PBJ system due by November 14, 2016?
- A.** Yes, but you could start submitting July 1, 2016.
- 50. Q.** Can CSV files be submitted instead of XML?
- A.** The PBJ System will only allow for XML file format and manual data entry submission at this time.
- 51. Q.** Can files be automatically uploaded (FTP or other methods) or will a user need to go to the site and manually submit them?
- A.** We do not allow for automation or scripting of submissions. A user will need to login to the PBJ system to submit it.
- 52. Q.** Are we uploading the XML or using web services?
- A.** You will create a ZIP file from one or more XML files and then the ZIP file will be uploaded.
- 53. Q.** Can we submit multiple formats for the same quarter? For example, some of our facilities are going to be manual submissions, or the same facility would be partially manual and then partially uploaded?
- A.** Yes, remember to use the “Merge” option when you submit your XML file. If you use “Replace”, the data entry portion will be replaced also.
- 54. Q.** Regarding submitting census data at the end of every quarter, what about pay periods that don’t align exactly with a quarter? I’ve got census days based on every day of the calendar year, but I don’t have payroll days based on every day in the calendar year. Can I submit staffing data that would apply to the next quarter; can you submit the census count for those extra days?
- A.** Daily staffing hours will be collected; however, the census is a snapshot (for one day only) on the last day of every calendar month.
- 55. Q.** Can census data be submitted separately from staffing data?
- A.** Yes.

- 56. Q.** Is the XML upload through SFTP or some other mechanism?
A. You will need to use the PBJ system within QIES.
- 57. Q.** Will the manually initiated upload be the only method for uploading or is there going to be a method to automate through a system? Is a person going to have to go browse and find a file?
A. The person has to submit the file; we do not allow for automation.
- 58. Q.** Will you allow people to submit test files?
A. No facilities will have practice through the volunteer period however.
- 59. Q.** So a software vendor can submit census information and the time clock can submit the daily hours?
A. Yes.
- 60. Q.** When you put the information in do you have to submit daily?
A. All staffing hours' data will be collected at the daily level. For example, you cannot submit summed up hours for the week, two-weeks, month, etc. However, you do have the ability to submit the daily hours all at one time at the end of the quarter or any increment during the quarter (daily, 2 weeks, and month) as long as the data in one XML file or data entry screen does not cross quarters.
- 61. Q.** If we have hours for our current employees, but not our contract employees and we want to participate in the voluntary; will the ratings be affected if there is partial data?
A. No data submitted during the voluntary period will be used for the '5 Star Rating' system.
- 62. Q.** If we are not ready by the beginning of the pilot on October 1st, 2015, are we able to join later during the voluntary period?
A. Yes, you are able to join the voluntary period later if desired; however, we encourage all facilities to participate early in the voluntary period to prepare their systems and processes for the Mandatory Period.
- 63. Q.** Are we able to submit information in 'hours' and in 'demographic data'?
A. You are able to submit employee information, staffing data, and the census information separately. However, you always need the header section. If you submit a section, make sure you have applied all of the edits to the section that you are submitting. Use the XSD to check for errors.

- 64. Q.** Does each XML file that is submitted have to be for one facility?
- A.** You are only able to submit one facility ID per XML file. One zip file can, however, have multiple facilities.
- 65. Q.** Are you able to put in hire dates and termination dates?
- A.** Yes, you are able to enter both. Once you put in a termination date you will no longer see that person. The PBJ application will have an option to show all the terminated employees if you need to enter a hire date to get them active again.
- 66. Q.** If someone is terminated and comes back, is it possible to take that person off the termination date?
- A.** No, the termination date stays the same; you need to enter a new hire date. The hire date needs to be greater than the old termination date. Note the employee ID will need to match so the system knows it is the same employee.
- 67. Q.** Is it acceptable if time is submitted and is broken into two different quarters, because of a night shift?
- A.** You need to split up hours between the quarters even if it was one shift that was worked. If hours span a calendar day, you need to report them for the day they were worked. You will also need to split your hours by 24 hours days. So if you have a night shift person working, their hours would be split into two days. For example, if an employee worked from 8:00 p.m. on 6/30/15 to 4:00 a.m. on 7/1/15, the hours would be submitted as 4 hours for 6/30/15 (for calendar quarter 2), and 4 hours for 7/1/15 (for calendar quarter 3). The dates cross quarters so these hours will need to be submitted in two different XML files.
- 68. Q.** If we set up our employees initially, can we then send a full dump of our employee data? Then the next month, do we send the full dump of the employee data again?
- A.** You are able to send in the list each time even if nothing has changed.
- 69. Q.** Do you resubmit quarter census if someone goes from Medicare to Medicaid?
- A.** If you find an error in any of your data for that quarter, you have 45 days after the quarter ends to make corrections. For more information, please visit <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityInits/Staffing-Data-Submission-PBJ.html> or email nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.
- 70. Q.** For the census count is it considering how many *days* in Medicare or how many residents are Medicare?

A. Census data is the number of Residents (Medicare, Medicaid, Other). Census data is captured on the last day of each month during the quarter.

71. Q. If you submit data manually, should you also submit it through the XML?

A. No, you have three options:

- a. Submit Manually only
- b. Submit through the XML only
- c. You are able to submit manually and using the XML.

72. Q. How do you change the census data from year 15 to year 16?

A. You are only able to submit census data for the end of the current month.

73. Q. Is it possible to go back and make corrections on data submitted?

A. You are able to make corrections up to 45 days after the end of the current quarter.

74. Q. There are fluctuations in the census each day of the month? Is there currently a way to account for that since we are only submitting census on the last day of each month?

A. Currently no, we are only asking facilities to provide census on the last day of each month.

75. Q. Are providers able to submit data through a third party?

A. A third party vendor could submit on your behalf; the provider facility will need to fill out the proper paperwork.

76. Q. Do you need to record hours every day?

A. Yes you need to record hours every day, but you do not have to go in and provide them every day as long as hours each day are being collected.

77. Q. How did people solve the contract hour issue?

A. It's the responsibility of the nursing home to gather the hours from the contractor.

78. Q. Is the payroll system set up with shifts that are split up by days?

A. They are split up by days.

79. Q. The information we are submitting is auditable so do we retain the reports for a certain period of time.

A. What you're entering will be stored in the system. We haven't published any information about how far back we may audit. We will not be auditing or have any CMS oversight action on anything submitted through the voluntary period. This period is so that facilities and vendors are able to become familiar submitting the data in order to meet the requirements once the mandatory period starts July 1, 2016. Please send any follow up questions to the policy mailbox:
nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.

80. Q. We are a SNF unit attached to a hospital, so all of our employees are hospital employees. Only the direct care staff is on the payroll directed for this unit. Should we include housekeeping as part of the hospital staff?

A. Housekeeping staff is optional. Those facilities are required to submit data like any other free standing facility. Hospitals need to use a reasonable methodology for allocating the time from staff that is used, specifically on the nursing home residence. Please send any follow up questions to the policy mailbox:
nhstaffing@cms.hhs.gov.

81. Q. If we have a vendor come in and nobody tracks their work in terms of hours, how do you get services provided into some sort of hour's calculation?

A. The guidance is to use a reasonable methodology to calculate those vendors' time in their facilities. Recommendation from other nursing homes is to set them up in timekeeping. Please view the Policy FAQ in the 'downloads' section on the webpage.

There is a Policy Q&A in the following link.

<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/NursingHomeQualityInits/Staffing-Data-Submission-PBJ.html>

82. Q. When will the voluntary become mandatory?

A. According to the NPRM the date is July 1, 2016. Please refer to the final rule for the actual date.

PBJ Report Questions:

- 83. Q.** In regards to the reports you talked about with the 50 facilities at a time, if you have 400 facilities, is it possible to save a group so you don't have to redefine your list every time?
- A.** There is an option to save your report parameters, which includes the facility list, up to 50 facilities. You can then reuse the parameters each time you run the report and will not need to regroup those facilities each time. It will save all of the parameters for this particular report. The parameters saved cannot be applied to a different report.
- 84. Q.** After we submit our PBJ data what is the turnaround time to know whether or not it was accepted?
- A.** Turnaround time for submission validation may take up to 24 hours.
- 85. Q.** After submission, are those reports sent out automatically, or do we need to log in to access those?
- A.** You will need to log into CASPER to get access to those final validation reports.
- 86. Q.** Regarding the 50 facilities limit, if I am a corporate user and wanted to submit data from more than 50 facilities, just for the submissions, would I be able to do it?
- A.** Yes, when you run a report on all 50 facilities at the same time, you would be able to pick those 50 facilities. If you have 300 facilities, you would have to run a report 6 times to capture all 300 facilities.
- 87. Q.** Do we receive the validation report in the same area where we receive the MDS transmissions?
- A.** Yes, it will be in CASPER, but in its own PBJ folder.