

Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining today's Medicare Access and CHIP Authorization Act of 2015 Funding Opportunity: Measure Development for the Quality Payment Program Pre-Application Call. The purpose of this Notice of Funding Opportunity is to provide technical and funding assistance in the form of cooperative agreements to entities to develop, improve, update, or expand quality measures for the use of the Quality Payment Program. Now I will turn the call over to Reena Duseja, Director of the Division of Quality Measurement in the Quality Measurement and Value-Based Incentives Group within the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality at CMS. Go ahead, please.

Thank you. Welcome to the MACRA Funding Opportunity Announcement Pre-Application Call. My name is Dr. Reena Duseja. I am the Director of the Division of Quality Measurement in the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality at CMS. We are very excited to announce this funding opportunity to external entities. We believe through the cooperative agreements that get awarded, we will be able to partner with specialty societies, patient advocacy groups, providers, and other stakeholders to develop quality measures in the Quality Payment Program, with the intent to expand the number of measures in the program's portfolio. We view this [word] as an opportunity to focus on both clinician and patient perspectives, what is meaningful to them in driving improvement for patient outcomes, as well as minimizing burden. The Meaningful Measure Framework CMS launched in 2017 helps guide and identify these key quality priority demands, as well as provides a framework for focusing on the areas of development with the future quality measures. I will end with thanking you again for attending today's Pre-Application Call. We look forward to receiving applications from you for this Funding Opportunity Announcement. And now I'll hand it over to Kim Rawlings.

Thanks, Reena. And if the Meaningful Measures Initiative is new to you, don't worry. We will be going over it at a very high level in a few slides. So thank you all for joining. I am very excited to have the funding opportunity out and to be giving this presentation today. I know you guys have been patiently awaiting it since May of 2017, when we first published the forecast. So I really appreciate, not only your continued interest in this topic, but also making time and taking the level of interest to join this call today. Next slide.

So this is just a very quick disclaimer. And really, the high point is this is to let you know that the funding opportunity announcement that went out on March -- or, yeah, March 2nd is the true, official resource for all questions pertaining to this. Next slide.

So what we're gonna be covering in today's presentation is just to talk a little bit about the Cooperative Agreement itself, go over its purpose, the background, briefly touch on the regulatory authority, and then get into some of the -- some of the structure of it, as far as program eligibility requirements, priority domains, and specialties. Talk a little bit about the funding, budgets, awards, and study, or -- and the duration. And we'll go into the application and selection of the award recipients, as well as technical guidance. And then I will pass it off to my colleague, Chris Clark, who will talk in more depth about the logistics of the grant and application process. Next slide.

This is just a quick overview of some of the acronyms that we'll -- that we will be using. I will try my best to spell them out during the -- the

presentation. But when these slides become available online, they're here for your reference, as well. Next slide. One more. Thank you.

So the purpose of this cooperative agreement -- or the purpose of the macrofunding opportunity is to provide technical assistance and funding assistance in the form of cooperative agreements to entities which I'll define a little bit later, to develop, improve, update, or expand the quality measures for use in the Quality Payment Program. And so this is really CMS' chance to involve you in the process of strengthening the QPP Portfolio. And we recognize the value of Measure Development by external stakeholders such as yourselves that really have the specific knowledge of clinician and patient perspective to build what we're hoping are really great, meaningful measures. And as a result of recognizing this value, on March 2nd, as you all well know, we published the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, MACRA for short, funding opportunities for Measure Development for the Quality Payment Program on grants.gov. Next slide, please.

So I'm sure that most, if not all of you are very familiar with MACRA. But as a very quick -- quick and dirty review, MACRA, as it pertains to us, is made up of two main sections. We have Section 101, which mandates the Advanced Alternative Payment Model, as well as the Merit-based Incentive Payment System, or APMs and MIPS. These join to make up the Quality Payment Program, or the QPP. Then besides that, we have Section 102, which mandates the Measure Development Plan, which was initially released in 2016, as well as subsequent annual reports. And so we're not going to go into great depth on this call to discuss the statutory -- the statutory regulations that allowed for this funding opportunity. However, all of that is laid in the Funding Opportunity Announcement itself. But it is worth noting that we are mandated with the Funding Opportunity Announcement to very closely align with the Measure Development Plan, which I will be highlighting a little bit later in the presentation. Next slide, please.

As Reena stated, we have a recent initiative that was announced in October/November of 2017. It's a part of the Administrators Patients Over Paperwork Initiative. And the overall goal is to help decrease clinician burden through more focused measure priorities, and to really put the patient at the center of our work. So in this diagram, you can see that the patient is at the center, where he or she should be. And that inner ring includes the four CMS Strategic Goals: improve CMS customer experience, state flexibility and local leadership, support innovative approaches, and empower patients and doctors. And so these goals serve as the foundational principles of everything that we do here at CMS. In addition to that, we also have six Cross-cutting Criteria. When we think about our Quality Measures at CMS, those are to eliminate disparities, track to measurable outcomes, safeguard public health, achieve cost savings, improve access to rural communities, and reduce burdens. And these Cross-cutting Criteria serve as desired outcomes at CMS, and, you know, hopefully, our partners, as well, believed are critical for improving the health system of our entire nation. And so in addition to this, we have the six Quality Priority Domains, which are highlighted both by the circles, and then again on the sides in the larger bold text. And underneath of those, we have 19 Meaningful Measure Areas that also track to the Cross-cutting Criteria by working to support the desired outcomes. So just as an example, we have a Cross-cutting Criteria of Achieving Cost Savings. So how are we going to do that? We can look to the Quality Priority Domain on the outside the circle of Making Care Affordable. The Quality Priority Domain has three Meaningful Measure Areas, which you can see. By focusing on these Meaningful Measure

Areas, such as appropriate use of health care, we can work towards the Cross-cutting Goal of achieving cross savings, and ultimately meet our CMS Strategic Goal. Each Quality Priority Domain and their respective Meaningful Measures will guide the effort of reducing burden for providers, while focusing on quality improvement efforts on only the most critical areas through the adoption of the Most Meaningful Quality Measures to better drive patient outcomes and lower costs. And we wanted to take the time to explain this initiative because, while statutorily, the Funding Announcements and subsequent Cooperative Agreements that will be awarded from this are mandated to align with the Measure Development Plan, we wanted to take a step back and kind of explain how we are organizing and how we're prioritizing measures across all of CMS, and not just the Quality Payment Program. And if you have more questions on that, in the Funding Opportunity Announcement, there is a link to the new Meaningful Measures website, as well. Next slide.

So with this, we're going to just start to get into a little bit more of the details of the Funding Announcement. Next slide.

So all types of organizations are eligible to apply for this Funding Announcement. And throughout the Funding Announcement, we refer to the, you know, organizations as "entities." We have several outlined here, such as patient advocacy organizations, educational institutions, specialty societies, independent research organizations, et cetera. But it's very important to stress that eligible entities are not limited to these types of organizations. Anyone can apply that meets all the eligibility criteria that are outlined in the next slide, such as hospitals, ACOs, states, et cetera. Next slide, please.

So while there is no limit on the type of organizations that can apply, with one exception that I'll get to in a moment when we discuss entities that are ineligible for applying, all eligible entities must demonstrate quality measure development, technical expertise for the entire Measure Development life cycle. And I'll outline that life cycle in a moment. But it's very important to note that they must have have experience throughout, from conceptualization through implementation. And obviously, you know, part of CMS putting out these Cooperative Agreements is trying to get new voices involved in Measured Development. And we've heard in past listening sessions and comments -- public comments, et cetera, that people and organizations need assistance. And we'll talk about technical assistance towards the end of the presentation. So we definitely recognize that not every organization that has an idea for a measure -- for a measure is going to have the expertise in every single stage of the Measure Development process. And so entities without Quality Measure Development technical expertise for the entire Measure Development life cycle are required to partner with at least one other organization, which here is referred to as a "Sub-Recipient," that has such expertise in order for them to meet the minimum requirements of having expertise throughout the entire life cycle. And you know, also important to note that even if the primary applicant has expertise throughout the entire life cycle, they're still welcome to partner with other -- with other organizations as Sub-Recipients to just strengthen their proposal, et cetera. Besides this, we have a few bullet points, a few criteria for entities that are ineligible for this Funding Opportunity Announcement. Entities that have active grants, cooperative agreements and/or contracts with CMS for Quality Measure Development, implementation, alignment and/or public reporting activities where CMS is the Measure Steward are ineligible to apply as a primary applicant. This does, however, exclude entities only receiving funding and/or support from CMS for their measure where CMS is not the

steward. Entities that are involved in accreditation of health care providers are also ineligible for the Funding Opportunity Announcement. And with this, while they're -- while both of these groups of entities are ineligible as a primary applicant, they may be a sub-recipient on a grant. Next slide, please.

As stated before, statutorily we are mandated to align with the CMS Measure Development Plan. And as such, the following priority, domains, and specialties are priorities for this Funding Opportunity. For priority domains, we have clinical care, safety, care coordination, patient and caregiver experience, as well as population help and prevention. For our specialty gap areas we have orthopedic surgery, pathology, radiology, mental health, oncology and emergency medicine. Please be aware that other priority domains, other specialty areas, will definitely -- those applications will definitely be accepted. You just want to make sure that you show it's a high impact measure and/or that the measure can fill an existing gap. But again, just to stress, other -- we will take other domains and areas. These are just simply our priorities. Next slide, please.

So the next several slides, I'm not going to go through each of these bullet points in great depth. They are also outlined in the Funding Opportunity. But it's important -- it's important to note that we have the criteria for the measure -- for measures as laid out in the Scoring Criteria in the Funding Opportunity Announcement. However, we also wanted to share kind of our more general CMS measure requirements and measure priorities, as well. So these next several slides are characteristic that CMS looks for in their measures. Obviously, not every single measure can -- not every single measure can pertain -- or, sorry, not every single criteria is going to fit with every single measure. However, again, we wanted to just share our general -- what we generally look for in a measure. So a couple of high level ones that are, you know, mandatory. One fun -- the goal of this is for recipients to produce one or more fully developed, specified, and tested quality measures using CMS standards in the -- as illustrated in the blueprint for potential use in the Quality Payment Program. And the blueprints, again, there are some more details in the Funding Opportunity. But the blueprint is CMS' guide for Measure Development from conceptualization through maintenance, use, and evaluation. And it lays out all of the processes, procedures, decision-making criteria, et cetera, that are made to develop, and implement, and maintain a measure throughout the entire life cycle. While we don't mandate that potential applicants use the blueprint verbatim, what we do say is that -- is that we ask that -- or it's a requirement that all measures meet generally accepted Measure Development principles, and embody CMS' general and technical principles, which are outlined in the blueprints. We def--again, the Funding Announcement -- Funding Opportunity does not state every step has to be followed. We definitely want innovation. We want streamlined processes. And as much as we hope that we will assist you with technical assistance, we are also looking forward to learning from your processes, as well. However, the blueprint does give us a guide -- or give you a guide on proven steps that produce measures that are ready for implementation at CMS. Just to restate, technical expertise in the entire Measure Development life cycle is required. And they must, again, follow the course that of business processes and decision-making criteria. And here is a depiction of the Measure Development Life Cycle, with Conceptualization in the center, instead of a linear process, because as we specify and test measures, we are continually revisiting that conceptualization phase and that initial concept. Next slide, please.

So again, not going through -- through this one bullet-point-by-bullet-point, but it's just important to note that State Quota Engagement, in particular engagement from patients and clinicians are extremely important, and that we look for a Measure Develop -- a measure that's developed in a rapid cycle fashion. Next slide, please.

Here are a few others, meaningful quality measure, where, you know, increasingly transitioning away from setting specific, and trying to be more focused on outcomes and cost-cutting measures, where possible. We -- and we're also focusing on patient-centered outcomes. And as you saw in some of the priorities that we laid out, patient report outcomes, more specifically. And it's very important to track disparities and any -- any unintended consequences. Next slide.

And here we just have some of those same principles stated a little bit more concisely. We are looking to prioritize electronic data sources, as well. And there is more information about that in the Funding Announcement. Next slide.

So while we do not -- while we will evaluate the processes and decision-making criteria that you lay out in the application and in the implementation plan, as stated, we do not mandate that you go through every single step of the blueprint. However, the ultimate goal is for the measure to succeed and -- and reach high marks, I guess, in the -- in using these six Evaluation Criteria. We have the five main Evaluation Criteria that's used across the industry. First being impact, opportunity, evidence, and importance to measure and report. Second, reliability, then feasibility, usability and use, and last, harmonization. We added the sixth for this Funding Announcement, again, just to stress the importance as outlined throughout the Funding Announcement -- Funding Opportunity that State quota engagement throughout this process is incredibly important. And especially with your unique perspective, this becomes even more of an important area for us. And to note, which, again, a few slides, but these are also the same five, if we're looking at the first five, the same five criteria that NQF looks for in their endorsement process, and what we will be looking for as we put -- as we decide on measures that go into the Quality Payment Program, as well. Next slide.

So now that we've discussed many of the requirements and who is eligible, et cetera, we want to get into some of the more concrete information around budget awards, et cetera. Next slide.

So periods of performance for the Cooperative Agreements that can be awarded can range from one to three years, with an estimated start date of August 6th of this year. And I'll talk a little bit in the next slide, or in the next couple of slides about what might impact the duration. We do have an anticipated amount of up to \$30 million to award for Cooperative Agreements across the next three years. And we're estimating that that may be anywhere up to 20 Cooperative Agreements. Per award, however the maximum amounts an organization or an entity may ask for in their Cooperative Agreement is \$2 million per year. So if they are applying for three years, then that would be up to six year -- sorry, \$6 million as a maximum. And again, the up to 20 Cooperative Agreements is truly an estimate. Obviously, if we do the math, there is a minimum -- there is an estimated minimum of five Cooperative Agreements being awarded. However, that depends on the amounts of -- that the top applicants that are awarded request. If more applicants are asking for only a million or two million dollars, you know, obviously, we would be able to -- obviously, we would be able to award more Cooperative Agreements. So

next I want to break down the timeline and look at what would vary the award amount and duration. Next slide, please.

So first, we'll talk about the timeline. Again, we are, estimating an August 8th award with an August 6th start date. And so if you are requesting a one-year award, again, which can be up to \$2 million total, these would be your dates for a two-year award, which, again, total, can be up to \$4 million, up to \$2 million being for year -- Budget Period 1 and Budget Period 2. So you would have a project period that went from August 6, 2018 to August 5, 2020. And that would be made up of two one-year budget periods. And the same goes for year three. Estimated period of performance of August 6, 2018 to August 5, 2021 made up of three individual one-year budget periods, and up to a total of \$6 million for that award in total. Next slide. And one more.

So one of our goals -- one of our goals when we thought about the structure of these Cooperative Agreements was to allow for flexibility, because we've heard, again, over the last several years of different organizations and entities are in different places in their Measure Development process are looking to develop different types of measures. Some we've heard from have a concept of one. Others, you know, are looking to develop a group of measures. And so we really wanted to allow for all types, to -- we really wanted allow a lot of variation in the applications that we received, so that we gave people the maximum amount of flexibility. So with the -- everyone at least has a minimum starting point. All applicants and potential awardees must have an existing Measure concept, based on evidence of a demonstrated quality gap, variation in performance, and opportunity for improvement. So everyone starts at that base line. However, we recognize that some organizations may be done, completely done, with the conceptualization phase, and really need help starting in the specification of the Measure. While others might be done, or halfway through the testing phase, and need additional funding and/or technical assistance to finish testing, put their Measures through the pre-rule-making phase, you know, additional funds and technical assistance to go through NQS endorsement, et cetera. So one of the factors that's going to cause variation in the award amount, as well as the duration, is where that organization's starting point is. Also, we would expect you, and we will be taking into account as we read the applications, as well, the number of Measures. Again, some organizations might submit one. Others, you know, might submit developing, improving, updating, et cetera, a group of, you know, five or six. We also have the complexity of a Measure. Obviously, that's going to have an impact on how long and, you know, the awarded amount that needs to happen to support the development of a more complex Measure, like a risk-adjusted outcomes Measure versus a Measure that might happen a little bit more quickly, or with fewer resources, perhaps, like a process measure. And again, those kind of decision-making guidelines are laid out in the Funding Opportunity. Lastly, we have endorsements. Endorsement from the National -- like National Quality Forum is not mandated. It's not a requirement of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. However, it is encouraged and it's time allowed. It is encouraged and -- and we will, you know, support the organization through that process. Next slide.

Here is some information to -- that just goes over what is required from a documentation standpoint. It is important to note that there are maximum page limits. So those -- so please be mindful of those. And then we also have the point -- points allowed. And there is lots of information on the application process on grants.gov for your review about the application process. But hopefully, everyone has seen the large rubric or scoring guide in the Funding Opportunity that we will be -- that we will be using, as well as the

Objective Review Panel will be using to score and review these applications. And another quick thing to note with this is, if you do have a partner or a subrecipient, a Memorandum of Understanding is requirement to show that relationship that you will be -- that partnership that you will be using to gain the experience needed to meet the eligibility requirement. Next slide.

And this is just a breakdown -- a high-level breakdown of the scoring mechanism and scoring metrics, I guess, for the Project Narrative Implementation Plan and the Budget Narrative. Next slide.

So the three most important dates I know that we all have written on your calendars, as I'm sure many of you do, as well, is the Application Due Date, which is May 2nd of this year, with an award date -- an anticipated Award Date of August 3rd, and an estimated Project Start Date of August 6th. Next slide, please.

So there is both pre-application technical assistance as well as post-application technical assistance for those awardees. Pre-application assistance, we have our pre-app location conference calls. You're on the first one. There is a second one on March 27th. We will be reviewing pretty much the same information that we are in this call today for the first hour. But we wanted to give potential applicants an opportunity to ask additional questions, the more and more that they start to develop their -- their applications. I'm sure, since you're on the call, you've seen our website. We did just this morning post a Frequently Asked Questions. We will be updating that regularly. And then we have a contact email. Because of the way that the grant application process works, we are not able to answer people individually, because that would be giving information to that entity. And we want to make sure that any information that we give is shared broadly to everyone who may be interested in applying. And so we are taking the questions that we get in from the email and turning them into our Frequently Asked Questions that, like I said, we will be updating regularly on our website. So that is the Pre-Application Technical Assistance that we're offering. Post-application, as Chris will go over, Cooperative Agree -- Agreements are a little bit different from grants. There is a little bit more involvement from us, and a little bit more support from us at CMS. And so we will be offering ongoing technical support, as well as monthly calls to the awardees to check in, answer questions, review any documentation, and give help where able to support their -- support their -- their development, and working through some of the CMS processes like, the pre-rule-making cycle, et cetera. Next slide.

So this concludes my section. So thank you very much. There are two additional slides that I'm not going to go over. But you will be able to see them when they become posted online. But I'm going to turn it over to Chris Clark, who is the Grant's Management Officer for this Funding Announcement. And, yep, you can switch to our Slide 31.

Thank you, Kim. That was very good. Okay. So as Kim said, I am the GMO, Grants Management Officer that is assigned to this program. I'm going to go through our slides, but at a very high-level overview, because, as Kim mentioned the Funding Opportunity Announcement is really where you need to concentrate, because that is what all the scoring criteria is based off of. So I will try to keep mine quick so that you can ask your questions. So next slide, please.

So in this slide, as you can see, this is the HHS Grants Management Process. This just gives a high-level overview of how the FOA comes about through planning, the announcement has been posted, the evaluation once all the applications have come in, and they go through a review, we do what's called "budget negotiations," where we conduct individual calls with those applicants that are chosen. Then there is the award, and then there is the post-award monitoring, which, as Kim mentioned, also, will be highly involved, CMS will. And then we have closeout. So next slide.

Once again, here is just another -- another chart to go over that. Next slide.

Okay, we will go over the application requirements, which I chose to keep very short, because I knew that Kim's group was going to go over that quite in detail. But all the Skinner forms that are required and have to be submitted with the application you will find in Section D and in Appendix II. Next slide.

Ah, so what is a Grant Cooperative Agreement? Grant Cooperative Agreements are defined as transferred money, property, and services and anything of value to a recipient in order to accomplish a public purpose through support or stimulation that is authorized -- authorized by Federal statute. So MACRA is a Cooperative Agreement. So we like to try and stay with -- away from the word "grant," because grants do not have very much Federal involvement, where MACRA will have a great amount of Federal involvement. So, please remember that when you are doing your application, keep that in mind. Next slide.

Okay, so substantial involvement. As you can see, there is quite a few bullet points here that I will not go over each one. But as Kim mentioned, my slides will also be available to all of you to go over at any time you want, be published. But the main part is is that -- one major example is that the CMS has the ability to halt any activity immediately if detailed performance specifications are not met. So please be aware that if you are not meeting your timelines and goals as a step forward in the application, you must have the ability to halt those activities at any time. Another major one that I like to go over is to the respect of the scope of work, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operations, and other management processes coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during formance -- performance. Next slide.

Okay. So here is just a very basic roles and responsibilities chart that you can look at. I will be the GMO for the program. I am also going to be the GMS for the program, a specialist. So I will be your main point of contact in the Grants Office. You have a Program Authorizing Official, and you also have the Project or Program Officer/Officers. And then on the non-Federal side, which is very important when you are applying for this Cooperative Agreement, is the Authorized Organizational Representative and the Principle Investigator/Project Director. Next slide.

Okay. Here is just a slide for Grants policy. All of this is listed in the FOA. I just wanted to make sure there were some basic bullet points so that you all were aware of where, if you did have any policy questions, this is where you can find them, if you still were having some issues with policy and not understanding them quite as much. I have -- my contact information is at the end of my slides, so you can feel free to email me, also. Next slide.

Okay. I did enter in some eligibility criteria. But I'm actually going to skip my eligibility criteria due to Kim and her group going over that so well. So I am going to keep going on to the next slide, please.

Okay, application process, next. So here is one of my most important slides from the Grants office, is all applicants much have an EIN number. There is no -- there is just -- there is no -- you have to have an EIN number. There is no exceptions to it. Just like every applicant must have a DUNS number, and every applicant must register in the system for Award Management. If you do not, you will not be considered eligible for an award. Next slide, please.

Okay. So the format requirements do the application submission process procedures. This is all outlined in the FOA. So I'm not going to go over the bullet points. But I thought it was good just to have as a visual representation. But as I said in the beginning, please make sure you adhere to the FOA. So next slide.

Okay. So, the standard mandatory forms that we use with most programs in CMS is the 424, 424A, 424B, and the SFLOL. You will find those in your application package on grants.gov. I will be concentrating heavily on the budget narrative. So I just wanted to make sure these two bullet points, that there is a 20-page limit. Please do not go over. You can be under if you want to be. And also, there are sample budget narrative and justifications in Appendix I. So I wanted to highlight those for everybody. Next slide, please.

So, for funding restrictions, this is just outlined in the FOA. I wanted to highlight some major bullet points for what direct costs are considered, what indirect costs are considered, and this Cooperative Agreement is not allowing pre-award costs. Next slide, please.

So once again, here are the funding restrictions. There are many bullet points. But I pretty much copied and pasted this from the FOA just to have as a quick reminder for everybody. But once again, as I said, please make sure that you are going by what is in the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Next slide.

Okay. So the process review and award, you will go to grants.gov to view the full Funding Opportunity Announcement and the application kit. The application is due in grants.gov no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, May 2nd. That is also on the very front page of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Once the application is submitted through grants.gov, we downloaded it -- we download into Grant Solutions, which is our major grant-making system that CMS uses for all grant programs. Then the application review process will begin. The program produces a decision memo -- memo recommending selected applicants. And then CMS will begin those budget negotiations with those selected applicants. And then the anticipated issuance award date is the 3rd, as Kim said and the period of performance will start, anticipated is the 6th of August. Next slide.

Okay. So if anybody is not aware, you can go on grants.gov and search by CFDA number. I have it posted there. All applicants' applications must be submitted in the required electronic PDF format in grants.gov. I put the deadline date once again. And then highlighted in red, applications not received electronically through grants.gov by May 2nd will not be reviewed. And the instructions for applications can be found on grants.gov. Next slide. Next slide, please.

Ah, okay. So our Grants Management housing data base is Grants Solutions, as I mentioned before. We do not do paper files anymore. The official file will be in Grant Solutions. So all applications and applicants that are chosen to be awardees, you will have access to your files at any time you need. As you can see right here, it is accessible to OAGM, and the Program Office, and the applicant. So everybody will be on the same page at all times. Next slide.

Here is the contact information, as Kim mentioned earlier. As you can see to the right, there is the programmatic questions. You can go there for administrative questions. You can email [grants@CMS.htts.gov](mailto:grants@CMS.htts.gov). Next slide.

And an important web link is the grants.gov website. Contact for grants.gov is -- there is their email and phone number. I just like to let all grantees know that even though I am the Grants Management Officer for the program, if you run into any technical issues at all with grants.gov, you must contact them. I do not have any authority to work inside of the grants.gov system. So I like to make that a very highlighted point. I'm pretty sure that concludes my presentation. So I'll say next slide.

Okay, we are now going to start the Q&A portion of the webinar. You can ask questions via chat or phone. To ask a question via phone, please dial 1-877-388-2064. If prompted, please provide conference ID number 2364237. We'll stand by for our first question.

Our first question is, "Does this grant require any participation in alternative payment models?"

Thank you for that question. In short, no. The grant requires that you submit a measure for consideration in the quality payment program, which is made up of APMs and MIPs. So you can develop the measure with the intention of submitting to either of those. You know, however, if they can be used for both of them, you know, that is increased value.

Thank you. Our next question is, "Should applicants focus on adult Measure Development, or would pediatric Measure Development be considered?"

Another great question. Thank you. So, of course, children are -- children are beneficiaries under the Quality Payment Program. So there is no limitation on developing pediatric-specific measures. However, we, you know, just recommend thinking about and considering the existing measure gaps and potential reach when building the business and case and discussing the concept.

Our next question is, "So if we are a family practice of providers, we could qualify under the APM we are with, if the APM chooses to apply, correct? We receive help from our local AHEC now, as well."

Can we ask that whoever sent that question in please resubmit and clarify? We weren't 100 percent clear on what you were asking. But we would love to try and answer your question.

We will stand by for that clarification and move to our next question. "Will there be any additional funding available for Measure Development after the \$30 million, presumably over three years, or is this three-year period the only opportunity to apply?"

So obviously, this is a new process for us, and the first time that we are offering Cooperative Agreements for Measure Development under this program.

So we are going to see how we progress, and see the success of this round. And then we'll evaluate any future availability for funds to use on a subsequent round.

Thank you. The next question is, "Do you have a standard MOU template that we should use for a [word] at the end?"

Chris, I'm going to see if you are able to answer that. I'm not aware of one. But I'll defer to you, Chris, as the Grants Management Officer.

No, there is not a standard MOU, just as long as you're outlining everything that is necessary to be eligible inside of that MOU with whoever you are partnering with. But I can also look into that a little bit more to see if there is a center template, and share that with the program office.

Okay, great. And a follow-up question to that, "Are letters of support accepted for purposes of grant submission?"

Chris, can you take that one, as well?

Sure. So in the FOA it says what -- what attachments are excluded from the page limit. I do not believe that letters of support are included in those exceptions. So if you would like to include them, you just need to make sure that you do not go over the total page limit, because even if you do, thinking that, "This is great, I'm giving all these letters of support," you will be considered ineligible.

Okay, thank you. And do we have any questions on the phone line?

Your first question comes from the line of Navina [word].

Hi, there. This Navina [word]. I had a question regarding eligibility. So we don't provide accreditation to health care providers. However we do have a co-branded certification program with the joint commission, which means that we provide certification to hospitals and health care facilities that meet standards for, for example, for a comprehensive stroke centers, or acute stroke-ready hospitals, and so on. Does that disqualify us from applying, or is that fine for us to apply?

Thank you for your question. We've actually received a large number of questions regarding the accreditation statement in the ineligibility criteria. So I think what we're going to attempt to do is address this further through our FAQ's that will hopefully be published by the end of next week, or so, in order to get back to everyone since there were a good dozen or so questions on accreditation. So, we definitely realize it's an important topic that has caused some confusion. So we're going to kind of go back to our -- go back to our notebooks and try and provide some further guidance and clarification on that.

Okay, great. Thank you.

Your next question comes from the line of Rachel Groman.

Hi. My question has to do with what happens after the award is completed and the measure is developed. Could you clarify whether the measure will still have to go through the MIPS/map process before being included in rule-making? Or is there sort of a guarantee that it will automatically be proposed for rule-making, not necessarily finalized, but it'll be proposed?

Great, thank you. That is a great question. So, the MIPS program statutorily does not have to go through pre-rule making. However, historically, we are putting and have put all of our MIPS measures through the pre-rule-making process. And it is outlined in the funding opportunity that these -- the measures developed from these Cooperative Agreements will have to go through the pre-rule-making process. They will not auto -- there is no guarantee that they will be put into the program. Having said that, as Chris stated, because of that substantial involvement with CMS, you know, we do have, not only those monthly tough bases, but as outlined in the Funding Opportunity, also those quarterly progress reports, and an annual progress report, you know, so that we're always in line, and you're always receiving some feedback, and have the opportunity to ask CMS questions to give everyone, you know, the highest -- highest possible probability of -- of getting the measures in the program. But there are no guarantees that they will be put into the APMs or MIPS. And the measures will have to go through pre-rule-making.

Thank you.

Okay, great. Our next question is, "If an entity is currently receiving funding from CMS as a sub-recipient for Measured Development of a measure that CMS will steward, does this make them ineligible to be a prime on a co-op agreement?"

A good question. So yes, because this organization and other organizations. If you are a sub-recipient, or sorry, if you are a sub-contractor on a CMS contract, you are technically not contracted directly with CMS, and therefore do not meet that ineligibility criteria. Oh, sorry. So just to clarify, yes, they would be eligible to apply as a primary recipient if they are not a primary contractor for CMS.

Okay. Our next question, "If we are submitting more than one measure concept in our application how should that be shown in the project narrative? For example, are there any efficiencies using the same information gathering information for the concepts? Or should each measure concept be discussed individually/sequentially?"

Thank you. Great question. Just to not get confused with the kind of business case and the explanation of performance, any performance gaps, quality measurement gaps, et cetera, each concept does need to be addressed individually for that segment of the project narrative.

Our next question is, "Are measures within the co-op award required to be ECQM?"

No, it is not required that the measures develop under this Funding Opportunity be ECQMs. However, it is encouraged. And per, you know, encouraged, one, from -- because we encourage it for all of our CMS Quality Measures. But also because it's a priority for the -- it's a statutory mandate and priority, as well. So it's not required, but highly encouraged. If you're not going to develop and ECQM, it's outlined in the rubric that you can still propose a non ECQM. You just need to state, you know, why it's not feasible in that situation, or why it's not best.

Okay. Our next question, "Does this grant only apply to measures that would be ruled out under MIPS?"

So the intention would be that these are measures for the MIPS program. However, we have parsimonious measures that -- so we would definitely look to add those measures where applicable to other programs.

Thank you. Our next question, "Understanding the NQF endorsement is preferred but not required, how does the CMS expect endorsement if measures have not been fully developed?"

So we don't expect the -- the -- the measures to be NQF endorsed when they apply, but rather they may use, you know, the resources, both technical assistance, as well as financial assistance of the Cooperative Agreements to pursue NQF endorsement during their project period.

Our next question, "I understand the grant requires submission of an evidenced-based measure concept. What is the exception at -- or, I'm sorry, what is the expectation of how well-defined that concept should be? Typically, the measure development process incorporates measured conceptualization via TEP. So does this grant essentially begin after the TEP input into conceptualization?"

The application needs to have a well enough developed concept where we can see the vision, see the gaps, see the opportunity for improvement, et cetera.

We realize that, you know, conceptualization is part of development process. But in order to look at the applicant, the -- you know, the minimum is that we get a concept so that we can actually, you know, analyze which measures we think will be developal -- developable and used in the QPP.

Okay. Our next question is in regards to Slide Number 12. And they are asking, "What does the underline on Slide 12 signify?"

We apologize. That was a technical error there. There is no significance to underlined versus not underlined.

Our next question, "May a sub-contractor on my application be a prime on another CMS contract?"

Could you repeat that question one more time?

Sure. "May a sub-contractor of my application be a prime on another CMS contract?"

Yes.

Our next question, "Is the expectation that all measure concepts proposed within the grant application will be included in the Quality Payment Program by the end of the grantee's overall period of performance, or only a subset of those proposed?"

The intention and hope is that all measure concepts proposed in the initial application make it through -- you know, make it through specification and testing successfully, and are proposed for the QPP program. That's the intention and hope.

Great, great. Do we have any other phone line questions at this time?

No. That's all the audio questions.

Thank you. We will stand by for our next question.

Great. So just to summarize, I think, on next steps. So in the coming, I guess week or two, I think it's about seven business days, or so, we will be publishing on the website a slide deck -- the slide deck that we used for this presentation, an audio-visual recording of the presentation, as well as a transcript of the presentation and Q&A. We realize that there are a handful of questions that we were unable to answer at this time, and unable to get to. And so we will be answering those via our FAQ's. I can assure you that we are capturing all of the written questions for our FAQ's, as well as any of the live questions, I guess, so to speak. Any of the live phone questions that we were unable to answer will all be captured again in the FAQ's. And for the questions that we did not -- or, sorry, and for the questions that we did answer, those will also be making it into our FAQ's in the coming week, or so, again, just to make sure that the information is available to everyone, even if they were unable to make the call today. So I just want to thank you all very much again, you know, not only for taking the time out of your very busy schedules for this call to hear an overview of the program and the Funding Opportunity, and, you know, the process for applying. But also, your continued interest and support throughout this past year as you've been patiently awaiting the publication of this Funding Opportunity. Again, we do have another call very -- it'll be identical to this one, scheduled for March 27th from 3:00 p.m. until 4:30 p.m., Eastern time. And the link is on your screens, as well on the website, if you would like to register for that call, as well, so.

This is a question to the Grants Office. Some of the questions I see are pertaining to, you know, the slides may say one thing, but the FOA says another. I would just like to clarify that. Please follow what it says in the FOA. Some of the slides, especially mine, could have some human error by accident. But the FOA is kind of like your -- your binding document that you need to stick to to complete your application. Some of the questions I saw said, "One slide said this amount of words, but the FOA says something different." Please go with what is in the FOA.

Thank you so much for taking the time out for the call. Please look, check out the FAQ's that are on the website now, and, you know, keep checking back, you know, Friday afternoons or so for updates. We will be working to try our best to update them weekly with your new questions. If you think of anything, or if you're, you know, starting the application process, again, all of the questions in our email, that you sent to the emails, we are turning into the FAC's, so please feel free to, to reach out to us there, as well. Thank you again for your support.