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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to all Plans to establish connectivity to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and to provide the data exchange process for participation in the Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) Program.

The scope of this document is to provide information on the following:

- Security and Authorization processes and requirements.
- Data Exchange Protocols:
  - Selection.
  - Installation.
  - High-level testing.
- Connectivity.

This document is intended for Plans that will exchange data with CMS as well as entities that will exchange data on the behalf of Plans, such as Third Party Administrators (TPA).

Please contact the MAPD Help Desk if there are any problems or questions encountered while following the procedures outlined in this document.

Phone: 1-800-927-8069
Email: mapdhelp@cms.hhs.gov

2 Overview

Exchanging information with CMS can be accomplished using different tools and procedures and is dependent on a Plan’s current capabilities and the volume of data to be exchanged.

In general, there are two (2) types of physical connectivity available for a Plan:

1. Internet.
2. Extranet through a dedicated T1 line to the CMS Data Center.

There are three (3) data exchange protocols available to the Plans:

1. Connect:Direct (C:D) through a dedicated T1 line.
2. TIBCO Managed File Transfer (MFT) Internet Server Web Interface.
3 Getting Started

3.1 Obtain a Contract Number from CMS/HPMS

All new Plans participating in the MAPD Program must receive a contract number(s) from CMS or the Health Plan Management System (HPMS) before they can begin. Contract numbers identify the organization and Part D offering. This identifier is five characters long, typically beginning with an alphabetic character followed by four numbers. After obtaining a contract number(s), Plans must register a designated person(s) to enter the Plan’s connectivity data into the HPMS Plan Connectivity Data (PCD) Module.

Note: The MAPD Help Desk will monitor new Plan contract bids and awards submitted through HPMS and will initiate contact with new Plans to assist in all phases of the CMS connectivity process.

Additional documentation regarding the HPMS PCD Module is available by:
1. Logging into HPMS.
2. Select Contract Management, then Plan Connectivity Data.
3. Select Documentation.

3.2 Enter Connectivity Data into HPMS Plan Connectivity Data Module

This module will request information on how data will be transmitted and/or received between CMS and the Plan.

CMS requires a copy of this entered data, with signature of the Plan External Point of Contact (EPOC) Approver, to be scanned and emailed to the MAPD Help Desk for all contract numbers before any files will be exchanged. Once all contact and connectivity data is entered into the module, Plans can select the “Create PDF option” to print the completed PCD form. Only one (1) signed form is required if all new contract numbers will use the same data exchange mechanism (i.e., Connect:Direct, TIBCO MFT Internet Server or TPA); otherwise, separate forms per transfer mechanism are required.

Note: This form is also the channel for Plans to communicate data routing changes in the future, as needed.

For Plans that have previously established connectivity to CMS for Part D data exchanges and do not wish to change that routing for their new contracts, the PCD form still must be completed and should reference their current configuration. These Plans do not have to complete the activities relating to connectivity set-up and testing; however, these Plans must update the HPMS PCD Module to add the new contracts.

Plans that will use a TPA to submit their Enrollment files must complete additional fields and an additional form within the PCD module. The additional fields will automatically be populated once the “3rd Party” option is selected for Enrollment. After completing all fields on the “Plan Connectivity Data – General” form, select the “Next” button to complete the “Plan Connectivity Data – T1 Connect:Direct / 3rd Party” form. Users will select from a list of TPA organizations that have already submitted the required information to CMS. If a TPA organization is not listed then the user can select “Other.”
Plans that wish to exchange data with CMS via a T1 line and Connect:Direct software (either from a mainframe or server) must complete an additional screen in the PCD Module. After completing the “Plan Connectivity Data – General” form, Plans that will use a T1 Connect: Direct line must complete the “Plan Connectivity Data – T1 Connect:Direct /3rd Party” form within the PCD module. In addition, the Connect:Direct Secure Point of Entry (SPOE) ID Request form must be completed and submitted to CMS. The link to the SPOE form is available in the Downloads section of the Plan Connectivity Preparation page:


**Note:** Establishing a new T1 line connection and the associated access can take six (6) to eight (8) weeks to order, schedule, and install. Plans need to make this a priority if this is the exchange mechanism.
4 Security and Access

In order to gain access to MAPD Systems, Plans’ resources must register in the Enterprise Identify Management (EIDM) system. This system supports three (3) Plan user roles:

- **EPOC** – Required – External Point of Contact; responsible for approving end users requesting access to CMS systems on behalf of a Plan. This person (or persons) cannot be an end user of CMS systems and must have the authority in the Plan’s organization to authorize user access.

- **MA Submitter** – Required – Resource(s) responsible for the transmission/receipt of data files to and from CMS via Connect:Direct, TIBCO MFT Internet Server, or Gentran. These users can be resources from a TPA organization, assuming Plan EPOC approval. These users also have access to the MARx User Interface (UI). In the MARx UI, this role is called the **MCO Representative Transmitter**.

- **MA Representative** – This role provides access to the MARx UI (called the **MCO Representative**); it is not required for data exchange, but is required for analysis and support of business processes. These can be resources from a TPA organization, assuming Plan EPOC approval. A user with the MA Submitter role can also request the **MCO Representative UI Update** role, in order to enter and correct Plan-responsible beneficiary enrollment related data through the MARx UI.

At a minimum, the Plan must have at least one (1) EPOC and one (1) MA Submitter registered.

Upon successful registration, a user will create a User ID and password. For more information on how to register in this system, please see the [CMS EIDM User Guide](https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/CMS-Information-Technology/EnterprisIdentityManagement/Guides-and-Documentation.html) on the EIDM Web site at the link below:


The following steps must be completed in the defined order for the registration process to proceed smoothly.

4.1 Submit EPOC Designation Letter to CMS

Before a Plan can have any resources register in EIDM, they must submit an EPOC Designation Letter, on company letterhead, as described on the MAPD Help Desk Web site. The link to the template for the letter is available in the Downloads section of the Plan Connectivity Preparation page:


This letter will be used by CMS resources to validate the EIDM registration information of the EPOC. Failure to submit accurate information in this letter will result in no, or delayed, access for all Plan users. Plans are encouraged to identify one (1) or two (2) EPOCs, depending on the size of the organization and number of eventual users. This activity should be completed as soon as a contract number is obtained from HPMS.

**Note:** All Plans must submit a letter identifying the EPOCs for each newly assigned contract number even
if there is a letter already on file for existing contracts.

4.2 Register EPOC in EIDM

Once the EPOC designation letter has been sent to CMS, EPOCs may register for the new contract numbers in the EIDM system (https://portal.cms.gov). New EPOCs will select the ‘New User Registration’ link to complete their registration; existing EPOCs will select the ‘Login to CMS Secure Portal’ link and modify their profiles to add the new contract numbers.

EPOCs will receive email notification when the registration has been approved by CMS.

4.3 Register MA Submitter and MA Representative – Enrollment, BEQ, ECRS

Once notified that his/her EPOC registration for a contract has been approved by CMS, the EPOC can notify the Plan submitters and representatives that they may register in EIDM. As with the EPOCs, new users will select the ‘New User Registration’ link to completion their registration; existing users will select the ‘Login to CMS Secure Portal’ and modify their profile to add the new contract numbers.

Users will receive email notification when the registration has been approved by the EPOC and setup is complete at CMS.

Note: Plans cannot perform the connectivity testing for Enrollment, Batch Eligibility Query (BEQ) and Electronic Correspondence Referral System (ECRS) file transmissions without having established at least one (1) MA Submitter in EIDM for their new contract number(s).

It is important to note that MA Submitters and MA Representatives must not register in EIDM until their EPOC has received their Graphical User Identifier (GUID).

4.4 Register User/Submitters – PDE/RAPS

All Plans that will exchange Prescription Drug Event (PDE) and/or Risk Adjustment (RAPS) data must contact the MAPD Help Desk to complete additional configuration steps.
5 Data Transfer Protocol – Tools and Processes

The following section describes the requirements to support connectivity and configuration. Section 5.1 describes the requirements for large Plans and how to obtain the software/hardware to support the activities. Section 5.2 describes the options available to small Plans, recommendations and benefits of each, how to obtain the necessary software, and the configuration and testing required for that option.

5.1 Large Plan Connectivity (>= 100,000 in Enrollment)

Connectivity for large Plans participating in the MAPD program (those with enrollment of 100,000 or more beneficiaries) should be implemented using a T1 line and Sterling Commerce’s Connect:Direct (C:D) software.

5.1.1 T1 Line and Connect:Direct

A T1 line directly connects the Plan to the CMS Data Center. The software to support the data transfer across the T1 line is C:D, a software product that can be licensed from Sterling Commerce. Plans are expected to fund the cost of these tools.

Plans seeking to establish a new T1 line to the CMS Data Center with C:D should contact the MAPD Help Desk to request the C:D Template. The C:D Template consists of the Plan Setup Information Document and a Plan C:D Setup Request form. The Plan Setup Information Document contains a link to the SPOE ID Request form. Both the SPOE ID Request form and the Plan C:D Setup Request form need to be completed and sent to CMS per the instructions on the forms.

5.2 Small Plan Connectivity (< 100,000 in Enrollment)

Two (2) options are available to the small Plans with less than 100,000 enrolled beneficiaries:

1. TIBCO MFT Internet Server SFTP.
2. TIBCO MFT Internet Server Web Interface.

Both of these options are available to use over an Internet connection.

5.2.1 TIBCO MFT Internet Server SFTP

Organizations opting to utilize the Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) with the TIBCO MFT Internet Server will be required to obtain System ID from CMS and host a Secure Shell (SSH) server with a Digital Signature Algorithm (DSA) or Rivest-Shamir-Adleman (RSA) public key.

For additional information about using SFTP with the TIBCO MFT Internet Server, please contact the MAPD Help Desk.

5.2.2 TIBCO MFT Internet Server Web Interface

Hypertext Transport Protocol Secure (HTTPS) is a secure Web interface to provide connectivity to the TIBCO MFT Internet Server hosted by CMS. Users will login to the TIBCO MFT Internet Server Web interface to send data to CMS. The URL for this site is https://eftp2.cms.hhs.gov:11442/.

Before connecting to the server through the Web interface, each Plan will need to configure their network firewalls and Access Control Lists (ACLs) to allow access to the URL mentioned above.
6 Connectivity Testing

The following section describes the testing instructions and objectives for large and small Plans.

6.1 Large Plan Connectivity

For Plans with a newly established T1 line to the CMS Data Center, users should ensure that both pages of the Plan Connectivity Data (PCD) Module are completed and sent to the MAPD Help Desk.

6.1.1 T1 Line and Connect:Direct

For Plans with a newly established T1 line to the CMS Data Center, users should ensure the CMS C:D SPOE Request form and the Plan C:D Setup Request form has been sent to CMS and the information supplied by CMS has been applied to the Plan system. The CMS C:D SPOE Request form and the Plan C:D Setup Request form are collectively known as the C:D Templates.

To facilitate testing, each Plan should call the MAPD Help Desk to schedule a time.

The Plan’s technical representative or programmer should have the Plan’s Job Control Language (JCL) and procedure (aka “PROC”) for submitting a file to the CMS mainframe constructed, tested and ready to be submitted. The following values from this job should be available for confirmation:

1. PNODE (Plan node name).
2. SNODE (CMS supplied node name).
3. SNODEID (CMS supplied user id and password).
4. Dataset name of file being sent to CMS from the Plan and JCL UNIT value.
5. RUNTASK statements and Job name to be submitted after a successful file transfer (CMS supplied).

A CMS technical representative or programmer will have the CMS Job Control Language (JCL) and PROC for submitting a file to the Plan mainframe constructed, tested and ready to be submitted. The following values from this job will be available for confirmation:

1. PNODE (CMS node name).
2. SNODE (Plan supplied node name).
3. SNODEID (Plan supplied user id and password, if required).
4. Dataset name of file being sent to the Plan from CMS and JCL UNIT value.

To test Plan connectivity, the following procedure will be used:

1. Verizon representative will review and confirm that the T1 line connection is complete and ready for use.
2. CMS will review and confirm that the Plan security access to the CMS mainframe is complete.
3. Plan technical representative will review and confirm that CMS security access to the Plan mainframe is complete.
4. Plan programmer and CMS programmer will review and confirm the C:D procedures for sending and receiving files values are correct.
5. Plan programmer will submit the job to send a file to the CMS mainframe.
6. MAPD Help Desk Representative will verify that the file transmitted from the Plan mainframe was successfully received at the CMS mainframe.
7. CMS programmer will submit the job to send a file to the Plan mainframe.
8. Plan programmer will verify that the file transmitted from the CMS mainframe was successfully received.

9. A successful test is complete when a file has been sent from the Plan mainframe to the CMS mainframe and a file has been sent from the CMS mainframe to the Plan mainframe. The files being sent and received by CMS and the Plan will be empty or contain canned test (not production) data. Upon a successful test, the MAPD Help Desk will send an email to the Plan confirming that the test was successful.

A Plan Connectivity Checklist can be found on the MAPD Help Desk Web site in the Downloads section of the Plan Connectivity Preparation page:


### 6.2 Small Plan Connectivity

Small Plans should follow the testing procedures defined below for their selected protocol and connectivity methodologies. Section 6.2.1 provides testing information for Plans using the SFTP protocol to the TIBCO MFT Internet Server.

Plans must register a User/Submitter in EIDM before completing connectivity testing. Therefore, please register in EIDM and await approval before performing the connectivity test.

#### 6.2.1 TIBCO MFT Internet Server SFTP

As indicated earlier, Plans opting to utilize the SFTP protocol with the TIBCO MFT Internet Server will be required to obtain a System ID from CMS, and host an SSH server with a DSA or RSA public key. If the Plan does not already have a System ID (GIS####), a SPOE form must be completed and returned to the Plan’s business owner.

To send files to CMS, Plans will need an SFTP client that supports SSH2 keys. Users will need to generate one of the following:

- An SSH2 RSA.
- DSA 1024-bit key pair with a passphrase with the SFTP client.
  - For example, Filezilla uses keys generated from PuTTYgen.

CMS will provide instructions to upload the public key from this pair to the MFT Web interface. Once the key is enabled in the system, users will be able to connect using the key and the System ID. CMS will provide assistance with sending a test file to confirm connectivity.

To receive files from CMS, Plans will need an SSH server with a DSA or RSA public key. Testing and setup will be coordinated by the MAPD Help Desk and CMS.