



## 2016 CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITAL (CAH) HARDSHIP EXCEPTION APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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### MEDICARE 2016 ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD (EHR) INCENTIVE PROGRAM INFORMATION

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**Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)** may submit a Hardship Exception Application if the criteria are met for a Lack of Infrastructure or Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Hardship Exception.

- If the CAH successfully met meaningful use in 2016, it will be **exempt** from the payment adjustment and does not need to submit this Hardship Exception Application.
- If the CAH did not successfully meet meaningful use in 2016 and it would like to apply for a Hardship Exception, the CAH must submit an Application no later than **November 30, 2017**.
- If the CAH has not previously participated in the EHR Incentive Program and would like to participate for 2016, the CAH has until February 28, 2017 to successfully attest to meaningful use to avoid the Medicare payment adjustment.

#### **CAHs that do not need to submit this form:**

**New CAHs** - As defined in the Stage 2 Final Rule 42 CFR 412.64(d)(4), a CAH that is new in the payment adjustment year (2016) and has not previously operated, will be granted a hardship exception and automatically exempt from the 2016 payment adjustment. Note that CAHs are **NOT** considered NEW if any of the following circumstances apply:

- The CAH builds a new or replacement facility/facilities at the same or another location even if this is coincidental with a change of ownership, a change in management or a lease arrangement;
- A CAH closes and subsequently re-opens; or
- A CAH that has been converted from an eligible hospital.

If any of these circumstances apply, the CAH should consider applying for a hardship if it has not successfully demonstrated meaningful use in 2016 and if at least one of the hardship reasons indicated on the application was met.



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## BASIC APPLICATION INFORMATION

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- To avoid the 2016 payment adjustment, this application must be submitted electronically or postmarked **November 30, 2017**.
- To file a Hardship Exception Application, the circumstance must be beyond the CAH's control *and* the CAH must explicitly outline how the circumstance significantly impaired the CAH's ability to meet Meaningful Use.
- This application must be fully completed for any CAH to formally file a Hardship Exception Application within the Medicare EHR Incentive Program.
- This application will be reviewed when the completed form and all required supporting documentation is received.
- If approved, this Hardship Exception is valid for the 2016 payment year only. If the CAH claims a Hardship Exception for the following payment year, a new application must be submitted.
- Determinations made by CMS or their designee regarding Hardship Exceptions are final and cannot be appealed.

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION

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- Electronic submission of this application is strongly recommended as submitting hardcopy or faxed applications may result in processing delays.
- Please download the application, and type in the dynamic form. You must save the application on your computer and attach it and any supporting documentation to the body of an email.
- This completed application and all supporting documentation must be attached to an email and sent to [ehrhardship@provider-resources.com](mailto:ehrhardship@provider-resources.com)
- All Hardship Exception determinations will be returned via email from [ehrhardship@provider-resources.com](mailto:ehrhardship@provider-resources.com) to the email address provided on the application.



- If electronic submission is not possible, by any means, please TYPE or PRINT all information using blue or black ink; do not use pencil and submit the application via fax to **814-456-7132**.
- CMS will only accept documentation submitted in Portable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word Document (.doc), Microsoft Word Open XML Document (.docx), Microsoft Excel (.xls) or Microsoft Excel Open XML spreadsheet (.xlsx) formats. These documents must be directly accessible through the email attachment.
- Missing documentation or submissions in formats other than those listed above could result in a determination delay or in denial of the hardship exception.
- All documentation is required at the time of submission and additional documentation will not be accepted.
- Retain a copy if your completed hardship exception application for your records.