

CMS EPCS Program Declared Disaster Exception Fact Sheet 2023 Measurement Year Declared Disasters

UPDATED: 08/01/2024

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Electronic Prescribing for Controlled Substances (EPCS) Program declared disaster exception was established to support prescribers affected by natural disasters and public health emergencies. Prescribers affected by certain circumstances will be granted an automatic exception by CMS. This fact sheet addresses the automatic declared disaster exception for the 2023 measurement year. This fact sheet will be updated if additional events are identified that trigger the declared disaster exception or if there are changes to previously identified events.

The CMS EPCS Program Declared Disaster Exception

The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception is automatically applied to prescribers identified as located in a CMS-designated region affected by a disaster (such as a [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#)-designated major disaster or Secretary of [Health and Human Services](#) determined public health emergency) for the measurement year*. For eligible prescribers, we aim to reduce burden by eliminating the need to submit a waiver request and granting an automatic exception for the entire measurement year.

We identify CMS EPCS Program eligible prescribers in CMS-designated areas that have been affected by a disaster based on the practice and mailing addresses associated with the prescriber in the Provider Enrollment, Chain, and Ownership System (PECOS) or National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES). Prescribers who are automatically identified will be granted an exception for the entire measurement year.

We make every effort to accurately identify all prescribers who are eligible for this exception. Prescribers should ensure that the mailing and practice address listed in PECOS and NPPES are current to ensure the declared disaster exception is applied correctly.

As of the time of publication of this fact sheet, we are applying this exception to prescribers in the following designated areas:

- Certain counties in Mississippi for the Mississippi severe storms, straight-line winds, and tornadoes: [Mississippi: DR-4697-MS](#)
- The U.S. territory of Guam for the Guam Typhoon Mawar: [Guam: DR-4715-GU](#)
- Certain counties in Hawaii for the Hawaii wildfires: [Hawaii: DR-4724-HI](#)
- Certain counties in Florida for Hurricane Idalia: [Florida: DR-4734-FL](#)
- Certain counties in Georgia for Hurricane Idalia: [Georgia: DR-4738-GA](#)

*For the 2023 measurement year, the national [Public Health Emergency \(PHE\)](#) are also on the Declared Disaster List.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I find out which areas are designated by CMS as being affected by disaster?

- We communicate information about events and circumstances that trigger the CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception through the CMS EPCS Program listserv. You can subscribe to the CMS EPCS Program listserv here: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCMS/subscriber/new?topic_id=USCMS_13022. In addition, we'll update this fact sheet to identify any new events or changes to previously identified events. You can find information about designated disaster areas in this fact sheet and on the FEMA-designated disaster areas webpage. [Appendix A](#) lists the counties identified as located in CMS-designated areas that have been affected by a disaster.

How can I confirm that I received the CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception?

- Starting September 16, 2024, you can check your exception status on the [CMS EPCS Prescriber Portal](#) to ensure the policy was applied correctly.

What happens if I'm granted the CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception?

- If you are granted a declared disaster exception, you have met the CMS EPCS Program requirement regardless of the percentage of your qualifying Medicare Part D controlled substance prescriptions sent electronically in the measurement year.

What should I do if I'm eligible for the CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception, but the exception wasn't applied?

- If you believe that you qualified for the automatic declared disaster exception, but don't see the exception reflected on your status in the CMS EPCS Prescriber Portal, CMS recommends the prescriber request a waiver for circumstances beyond the prescriber's control via the Portal.
- The waiver application period, via the CMS EPCS Prescriber Portal, is open for 60 days. For the 2023 measurement year, the waiver application will be available at 10 a.m. ET on September 16, 2024, and will close at 8 p.m. ET on November 18, 2024. CMS will also provide technical assistance for waiver requests via telephone for prescribers who cannot apply for their waiver online.
- The CMS EPCS Program waiver is specific to the federal program only. Please check to see if your state has separate requirements for electronic prescribing for controlled substances, including waiver requirements.

What should I do if I was impacted by a disaster outside of those identified for the CMS EPCS program?

- If you were unable to meet the CMS EPCS Program requirement due to a disaster outside of those identified for the CMS EPCS Program, CMS recommend the prescriber request a waiver for circumstances beyond the prescriber’s control via the Portal.

Getting Help and Support

CMS EPCS Program Website

The CMS EPCS Program website is the centralized location for resources and updates for clinicians. Visit the program website at <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/e-health/eprescribing/cms-eprescribing-for-controlled-substances-program>.

CMS EPCS Program Listserv

To receive CMS EPCS Program information and updates, you can subscribe to the [CMS EPCS Program listserv](#).

Contact the CMS EPCS Service Center

You can contact the CMS EPCS Program Service Center by email at EPCS-EPrescribe@cms.hhs.gov, create a [CMS EPCS Program Service Center ticket](#), or by phone at 1-866-288-8292 (Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET). People who are deaf or hard of hearing can dial 711 to be connected to a TRS Communications Assistant.

Version History Table

If we need to update this document, changes will be identified here.

Date	Change Description
06/18/2024	Original Posting
08/01/2024	Updated the PHE

Appendix A

The table below lists the counties/areas located in a CMS-designated region affected by a disaster during the 2023 CMS EPCS Program measurement year. (This information is current as of the most recent date in the version history table and may not reflect changes that have already been identified on the FEMA pages linked above.)

For the 2023 measurement year, the national [Public Health Emergency \(PHE\)](#) are also on the Declared Disaster list.

Mississippi Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, and Tornadoes – <u>Mississippi Counties - DR-4697-MS</u>		
The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in Mississippi:		
PA-A		
Carroll Humphreys Monroe	Montgomery Panola Sharkey	Washington
PA-B		
Carroll Humphreys Monroe	Montgomery Panola Sharkey	Washington

Guam Typhoon Mawar – <u>U.S. Territory of Guam - DR-4715-GU</u>
The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following county in Guam:
PA-A
Guam (County-equivalent)
PA-B
Guam (County-equivalent)

Hawaii Wildfires – <u>Hawaii Counties - DR-4724-HI</u>
The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in Hawaii:
PA-A
Maui (County)
PA-B
Hawaii (County) Maui (County)

Florida Hurricane Idalia – Florida Counties - DR-4734-FL

The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in Florida:

PA-A

Baker	Gilchrist	Manatee
Charlotte	Hamilton	Nassau
Citrus	Hernando	Pasco
Columbia	Jefferson	Pinellas
Dixie	Lafayette	Sarasota
Duval	Leon	Suwannee
Franklin	Levy	Taylor
Gadsden	Madison	Wakulla

PA-B

Alachua	Gilchrist	Orange
Baker	Gulf	Osceola
Bay	Hamilton	Pasco
Bradford	Hardee	Pinellas
Brevard	Hernando	Polk
Calhoun	Hillsborough	Putnam
Charlotte	Jefferson	Sarasota
Citrus	Lafayette	Seminole
Clay	Lake	St. Johns
Collier	Lee	Sumter
Columbia	Leon	Suwannee
DeSoto	Levy	Taylor
Dixie	Liberty	Union
Duval	Madison	Volusia
Flagler	Manatee	Wakulla
Franklin	Marion	
Gadsden	Nassau	

Georgia Hurricane Idalia – Georgia Counties - DR-4738-GA

The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in Georgia:

PA-A

Appling	Clinch	Montgomery
Atkinson	Coffee	Pierce
Bacon	Colquitt	Screven
Berrien	Cook	Tattnall
Brantley	Echols	Thomas
Brooks	Emanuel	Tift
Bulloch	Glynn	Toombs
Burke	Jeff Davis	Treutlen
Camden	Jenkins	Ware
Candler	Lanier	Wayne
Charlton	Lowndes	

Georgia Hurricane Idalia – Georgia Counties - DR-4738-GA

The CMS EPCS Program declared disaster exception applies to the following counties in Georgia:

PA-B

Appling	Clinch	Montgomery
Atkinson	Coffee	Pierce
Bacon	Colquitt	Screven
Berrien	Cook	Tattnall
Brantley	Echols	Thomas
Brooks	Emanuel	Tift
Bulloch	Glynn	Toombs
Burke	Jeff Davis	Treutlen
Camden	Jenkins	Ware
Candler	Lanier	Wayne
Charlton	Lowndes	