



CMS Snapshot

December 19, 2019-January 2, 2020

Delivered to you by the Partner Relations Group in the Office of Communications

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, December 19, 2019 through 2pm Thursday, January 2, 2020.

News Releases

*December 19- [HHS Secretary Azar Statement on FDA Approval of Ebola Vaccine](#). On Thursday, December 17, 2019, the Food and Drug Administration approved a vaccine made by Merck for the Zaire strain of the Ebola virus, which caused more than 11,000 deaths during the 2014 West Africa outbreak and has caused more than 2,000 deaths in the current outbreak in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the first FDA approval of a vaccine for the prevention of this deadly virus, and HHS's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) provided significant support for the development of the vaccine. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

*December 19- [CMS Announces Strong Participation in Value-Based Medicare Advantage Model for CY 2020 and New Opportunities for CY 2021](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released data on participation in the Medicare Advantage (MA) Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model for Calendar Year (CY) 2020 as well as details on the Model application process for CY 2021. The VBID Model tests innovative strategies in MA plan design.

*December 20- [HHS Secretary Azar Statement on ACA Exchange Program Integrity Final Rule](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued the Exchange Program Integrity Final Rule, which implements policies aimed at protecting taxpayer dollars by ensuring that Exchange enrollees are accurately determined eligible for premium subsidies. HHS Secretary Alex Azar issued the following statement.

*December 20- [CMS Announces Enhanced Program Integrity Efforts for the Exchange](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the Exchange Program Integrity Final Rule, today, that implements policies aimed at protecting taxpayer dollars by ensuring that Exchange enrollees are accurately determined eligible for premium subsidies.

*December 20- [Federal Exchange Enrollment Remains Stable for the Third Consecutive Year in a Row](#). Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the weekly enrollment snapshot through 11:59PM Eastern Time on December 17, for the 2020 Open Enrollment Period with over 8.3 million people enrolled compared to approximately 8.5 million people at the end of the Open Enrollment Period last year on December 15, 2018. This includes those consumers who were granted an extension because they were unable to complete the enrollment process on December 15.

*December 27- [CMS Statement on Extended Comment Period for Transparency in Coverage Proposed Rule \(CMS-9915-P\)](#). Today, CMS is extending the comment period for the previously released Transparency in Coverage Proposed Rule published on November 27, 2019 by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Department of the Treasury. This proposed rule delivers on President Trump's Executive Order on Improving Price and Quality Transparency.

*December 30- [Ambulance Company Pays \\$65,000 to Settle Allegations of Longstanding HIPAA Noncompliance](#). West Georgia Ambulance, Inc. (West Georgia), has agreed to pay \$65,000 to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and to adopt a corrective action plan to settle potential violations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Security Rule. West Georgia is an ambulance company that provides emergency and non-emergency ambulance services in Carroll County, Georgia.

*January 2, 2020- [FDA Finalizes Enforcement Policy on Unauthorized Flavored Cartridge-Based E-Cigarettes That Appeal to Children, Including Fruit and Mint](#). Amid the epidemic levels of youth use of e-cigarettes and the popularity of certain products among children, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today [issued a policy prioritizing enforcement](#) against certain unauthorized flavored e-cigarette products that appeal to kids, including fruit and mint flavors. Under this policy, companies that do not cease manufacture, distribution and sale of unauthorized flavored cartridge-based e-cigarettes (other than tobacco or menthol) within 30 days risk FDA enforcement actions.

Fact Sheets

*December 19- [Medicare Advantage Value-Based Insurance Design Model Calendar Year 2021 Fact Sheet](#). The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is announcing Calendar (CY) 2020 participation in the Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model and details for the application process for CY 2021 for eligible Medicare Advantage (MA) organizations.

*December 20- [2019 Health and Human Services Exchange Program Integrity Final Rule Fact Sheet](#). CMS released a final rule on December 20, 2019, aimed at protecting taxpayer dollars by ensuring that Exchange enrollees are accurately determined eligible for premium subsidies. The

rule addresses several audit recommendations from the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which identified weaknesses in the eligibility determination process for advance payments of the premium tax credit (APTC) and cost-sharing reductions (CSRs) in both State and Federal Exchanges.^{[11](#)}

*December 20- [Federal Health Exchange Weekly Enrollment Snapshot: Week 7](#). In week seven of the 2020 Open Enrollment, 4,421,179 people selected plans using the HealthCare.gov platform or were automatically re-enrolled in a plan. Typically, enrollment weeks are measured Sunday through Saturday. However, the deadline to sign up for [January 1](#) coverage was extended until 3:00AM EST on December 18, to accommodate consumers who attempted to enroll in coverage before the deadline and were unable to complete the enrollment process. This week's snapshot accounts for both week seven and the extension period. Consequently, it is measured Sunday through Tuesday.

Blogs

*December 19- [Now that you're covered for 2020, don't forget to pay your premium](#). Congratulations on your enrollment in a 2020 Marketplace plan! Now that you're covered, don't forget to pay your monthly [premium](#) to your health insurance company (not the Marketplace) to activate your coverage. Your coverage won't start until you do.

*December 27- [Get ready for a new year of coverage](#). The start of a new year can bring many changes, including some to your Medicare coverage. If you changed health or drug plans for 2020, your new coverage begins January 1. Costs may have changed too so check out your [basic costs](#) for Medicare-covered tests, items, and services. For more personalized and cost specific information, visit your [Medicare account](#) or create one.

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