



CWF Eligibility Sunset Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Questions	Answers
<p>Is CMS eliminating access to CWF eligibility?</p>	<p>CMS will begin removing access to Common Working File (CWF) eligibility transactions HIQA, HIQH, ELGA and ELGH effective February 1, 2020. Submitters that aggregate transactions for otherwise disparate providers (e.g., clearinghouses, billing services, software vendors, etc.) and have both HETS and CWF based eligibility access should use HETS exclusively. CMS will remove HIQA/HIQH/ELGA/ELGH access for these submitters by removing role-based access for specific CMS RACF IDs. CMS will remove access starting with high-volume aggregators. Aggregators that use both HETS and CWF based eligibility should assume they must use HETS only no later than February 1, 2020.</p>
<p>Who will lose access to the CWF eligibility screens as of February 1, 2020?</p>	<p>CMS will begin the CWF eligibility sunset process with organizations that aggregate eligibility transactions for otherwise disparate providers (e.g., clearinghouses, billing services, software vendors, etc.) AND that have access to HETS and CWF eligibility. These organizations have been instructed to use HETS only.</p>
<p>When you say ‘CWF eligibility’ – what systems does that mean?</p>	<p>CMS will modify RACF IDs to remove access to the following CWF eligibility transactions: HIQA, HIQH, ELGA and ELGH. CWF eligibility accessed through the FISS DDE, will not be impacted. This action will not affect users access to beneficiary eligibility through MAC Provider Portals or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) as they already utilize HETS for eligibility information.</p>
<p>What criteria is used to determine which organizations will have their CWF eligibility access terminated?</p>	<p>CMS is reviewing RACF ID accounts of high-volume CWF eligibility users whose organizations also have Medicare eligibility access via HETS. The initial focus is on aggregators (e.g., clearinghouses, billing services, software vendors, etc.).</p>
<p>I use a clearinghouse for eligibility. Does this affect me?</p>	<p>This change may affect you if your clearinghouse has access to Medicare eligibility via HETS. For most providers, this change will be transparent because their clearinghouse will automatically route the eligibility queries to HETS instead of CWF. Please contact your clearinghouse to ensure that your Medicare eligibility request is being routed to HETS.</p>



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<p>I use a software vendor for eligibility. Does this affect me?</p>	<p>This change may affect your software vendor -- For most providers, this change will be transparent because their software vendor will automatically route the eligibility queries to HETS instead of CWF. Please contact your software vendor to ensure that your Medicare eligibility request is being routed to HETS.</p>
<p>I use a billing service for eligibility. Does this affect me?</p>	<p>This change may affect your billing service -- For most providers, this change will be transparent because their billing services will automatically route the eligibility queries to HETS instead of CWF. Please contact your billing services to ensure that your Medicare eligibility request is being routed to HETS.</p>
<p>I use a MAC Provider Portal for eligibility. Does this affect me?</p>	<p>MACs already utilize HETS as the source system for their Provider Portal and their interactive voice response (IVR) phone systems. Users of the MAC's Provider Portal will not be impacted.</p>
<p>I still use the CWF for eligibility because it has the entitlement reason that is not supplied in the HETS 271 response. When will CMS add entitlement to HETS?</p>	<p>HETS does not return a reason for entitlement. Beneficiaries can be entitled to Medicare for the following reasons: Age (65 or older), Disability (those who have received monthly Social Security disabled benefits for 24 months), and End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) (those enrolled in Medicare due to needing a regular course of dialysis or a kidney transplant, who could be entitled to Medicare based solely on ESRD, or both Age and ESRD, or solely on Disability. Based on the patient's age and ESRD information returned by HETS, you can determine the reason for entitlement. Also check Medicare Secondary Payer information returned by HETS for coverage policies that a primary to Medicare coverage.</p>
<p>I work with hospice providers. We delayed using HETS because it did not return all Hospice benefit periods for all patients. Has this been resolved?</p>	<p>The HETS 271 response was modified in November 2019 to return all historical Hospice information regardless of whether the requested Date(s) of Service intersected with the Hospice episode.</p>



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<p>I would like to know once the transition has taken place, where I would normally type 'HIQA' - would I type in 'HETS' instead? Is the screen still going to look the same or slightly different?</p>	<p>DDE/FISS will not be impacted.</p>
<p>How do I get a HETS login? How do I get a HETS User ID?</p>	<p>HETS is not a User ID or login based system. Providers cannot obtain a User ID or login and start using the system immediately. HETS is a system -to-system enterprise Medicare eligibility solution designed for high-volume submitters. See https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/CMS-Information-Technology/HETSHelp/HowtoGetConnectedHETS270271 Many smaller practices or individual providers may choose to utilize a MAC Provider Portal or another intermediary to obtain Medicare eligibility information via HETS.</p>
<p>Can I call a MAC and get Medicare eligibility over the phone?</p>	<p>CMS requires providers to use their Medicare Administrative Contractor's (MAC's) Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system or self-service portal to access claim status and beneficiary eligibility information. MAC Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are required to refer providers back to the IVR or portal if they have questions about claims status or eligibility that can be handled by the IVR or portal. The IVR and portal are available to providers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with allowances for normal claims processing and system mainframe availability, as well as normal system maintenance.</p>
<p>Is there a fee to use HETS?</p>	<p>CMS does not charge fees to use HETS. However, submitters must obtain connectivity to HETS via TCP/IP (from a CMSNet vendor) or obtain and implement a SOAP or MIME connection over the internet using secure certificates – and obtaining those certificates (as well as the technical knowledge to implement a connection to use HETS) may require fees from other non-government organizations. Providers that are looking for a no-cost Medicare eligibility solution should consider utilizing their MAC Provider Portal for eligibility services.</p>



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Will these changes to HIQA, HIQH, ELGA and ELGH affect my other CWF services?	No, CMS will only remove the accesses tied to HIQA, HIQH, ELGA and ELGH to the RACF ID account. Other CWF services (like DDE/FISS) will not be impacted.
We do not use HETS. Does this mean I can continue using HIQA indefinitely?	No, CMS will only remove the accesses tied to HIQA, HIQH, ELGA and ELGH to the RACF ID account. Other CWF services (like DDE/FISS) will not be impacted.