

Non-Exhaustive Databases of Essential Community Providers 340B Drug Program and 1927(c) Providers

HHS is releasing the attached database of available essential community providers (ECPs) to assist issuers in complying with the requirements specified in 45 CFR 156.235 and outlined in CMS' "Letter to Issuers on Federally-facilitated and State Partnership Exchanges", available at: <http://www.cciio.cms.gov/resources/files/issuer-letter-3-1-2013.pdf>. Under that regulation, essential community providers are those who serve predominantly low-income, medically underserved individuals. They include health care providers defined in section 340B(a)(4) of the Public Health Service Act and described in section 1927(c)(1)(D)(i)(IV) of the Social Security Act.

It is not exhaustive, and does not include every provider that participates or is eligible to participate in the 340B drug program, every provider that is described under section 1927(c)(1)(D)(i)(IV) of the Social Security Act, or providers that might otherwise qualify under the regulatory standard discussed in the Letter to Issuers. While HHS will not be able to update the list prior to submission of issuer applications for the 2014 coverage year, QHP issuers may include providers in their application that meet the regulatory standard but do not appear in the database. CMS will use the non-exhaustive database of ECPs as the basis for determining the number of available ECPs in the QHP's service area. This would form the denominator of the percentage of available ECPs included in the issuer's provider network(s), as referenced in the Letter to Issuers.

To assist CMS and the states in evaluating QHP applications against the sufficiency standard as described in the Letter to Issuers, CMS developed an analytic evaluation tool that computes the percentage of available ECPs in the QHP's service area that are also included in the issuer's provider network(s). The tool for evaluating ECP inclusion was built prior to finalization of the ECP list. As a result, for 2014, the analytic tool bases the denominator of the evaluation percentage on the providers designated as "in the evaluation tool" in the database. All providers included in a QHP issuer's application that meet the federal regulatory standard will count toward the numerator of the evaluation percentage.

In addition, HHS is also making available the attached database of Federally Qualified Health Center grantees, which are eligible to participate in the 340B Drug Program, that provide dental services either on-site or through referral. Issuers offering stand-alone dental plans may want to use this database to help identify ECPs that provide dental services.

HHS expects to monitor inclusion of ECPs in QHP provider network(s) over time, including providers that issuers write in, and will update this database in future years. Questions about the database may be directed to essentialcommunityproviders@cms.hhs.gov.

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