

# Hospice Quality Reporting Program

## Quarterly Updates for July – September 2021

*This document provides Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP)-related updates on events and guidance from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2021 (July – September 2021) and prepares for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2021 (October – December 2021).*

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### Tips of the Quarter

#### **QM Report Changes – HCI and HVLDL**

As finalized in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Hospice Final Rule, effective October 1, 2021, the HQRP includes two new claims-based quality measures: the Hospice Care Index (HCI) and Hospice Visits in the Last Days of Life (HVLDL). As of September 15, 2021, you can view your hospice’s scores for HCI and HVLDL in your Agency-Level Quality Measure (QM) Reports, available in the Certification and Survey Provider Enhanced Reports (CASPER). These QM Reports will include hospice and national rates for HVLDL and the overall HCI score. HCI will also include details about the ten individual indicators used to calculate the overall HCI score, including numerator, denominator, and national percentile. Hospices can use this information to deepen their understanding of the measures and initiate efforts to improve the quality of care they deliver.

#### **Star Ratings for CAHPS® Hospice Survey**

As finalized in the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule, CMS will calculate Star Ratings for the CAHPS® Hospice Survey for public reporting on Care Compare. Prior to public reporting, CMS will have a dry run of the Star Ratings through hospice preview reports, beginning in 2022. Additional details around the timing

of the dry run and a review of the Star Ratings methodology will be discussed on a Home Health, Hospice, and DME Open Door Forum (ODF) in fall 2021.

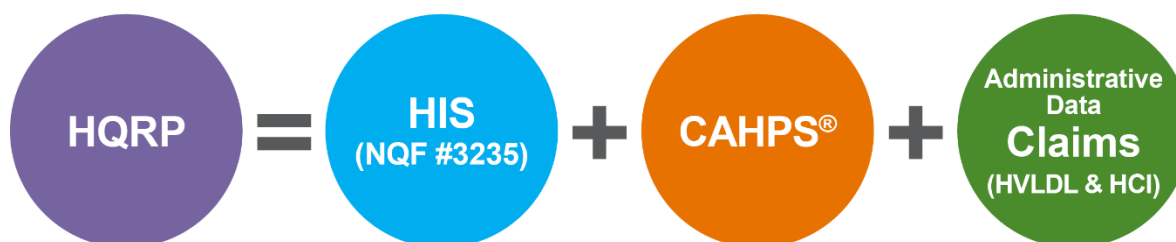
## Section 1: HQRP Updates

### Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Hospice Payment Rate Update Final Rule (CMS-1754-F)

On August 4, 2021, the FY 2022 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Rate Update, Hospice Conditions of Participation Updates, Hospice and Home Health Quality Reporting Program Requirements Final Rule was published. This rule finalizes changes to the Hospice Conditions of Participation (CoPs) and Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP). The rule is effective on October 1, 2021.

As a result of this rule, the HQRP will contain four quality measures that capture care across the hospice stay. These measures are:

- HIS-based Hospice Comprehensive Assessment at Admission (NQF #3235)
- Claims-based Hospice Care Index (HCI)
- Claims-based Hospice Visits in the Last Days of Life (HVLDL)
- CAHPS® Hospice Survey



The Final Rule can be downloaded from the [Federal Register](#).

### HQRP Compliance Reminders






- **General Requirements:** HQRP data collection requirements for both the Hospice Item Set (HIS) and CAHPS® Hospice Survey are defined for the **Calendar Year (CY): January 1-December 31**. To comply with the HQRP, each CY hospices must submit and ensure acceptance of at least 90% of all required Hospice Item Set (HIS) records by the 30-day submission deadline and participate monthly with the CAHPS® Hospice Survey by utilizing a CMS-approved third-party vendor, in accordance with HQRP requirements. Since administrative data is collected from claims, hospices with claims data are 100% compliant with the HCI and HVLDL claims-based measure submission requirements.
- **Payment** is impacted during the corresponding **Fiscal Year (FY): October 1-September 30**. Hospices are subject to a payment reduction in their annual payment update (APU) if they fail to comply with the HQRP requirements. Beginning in FY 2024 (CY 2022 data) the APU penalty will increase from 2% to 4%.

**Please Note:** This document is not intended to be used as a guidance document as the information it contains may be time-limited. Please check the HQRP Spotlight and Announcements webpage at <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/Spotlight.html> for all updates related to the HQRP.

For more information about HQRP Requirements and documents to assist provider, please visit the [HQRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) webpage. HQRP Trainings by topic can be found on the [HQRP Training and Education Library](#) webpage and in the download section.

## Section 2: HOPE Updates

### HOPE Development Process

HOPE Information Gathering	HOPE Testing	HOPE Rulemaking	HOPE Implementation	HOPE Quality Measures
				

We are developing a new standardized patient assessment tool for the HQRP, to be proposed in future rulemaking. The hospice patient assessment instrument will be Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE).

Development of HOPE is ongoing. During the summer 2021, CMS began recruiting and selecting volunteers for the HOPE Beta Test, the final testing phase to confirm assessment item reliability and validity. Beta testing is expected to begin in late 2021 or early 2022. Additional information about the HOPE Beta Test is available on the [HQRP Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage.

The development of HOPE is an important part of the Meaningful Measures initiative to improve outcomes for patients, their families, caregivers, and providers while also reducing burden on providers and clinicians. The HOPE assessment tool is important for developing a set of hospice quality measures, including outcome measures that reflect the needs of patients, their families, and caregivers throughout the hospice stay.

**Other HOPE Resources:** Please look for other resources on the [HOPE](#) page of the HQRP website.

## Section 3: Public Reporting Updates

The section below includes key public reporting dates. Providers should review the timeline to ensure they are familiar with important upcoming public reporting dates, and refer to the [Public Reporting: Key Dates for Providers](#) webpage on the HQRP website for more information.

### Temporary Data Freeze – November 2020 Refresh through November 2021 Refresh

On March 27, 2020, CMS sent a [MLN Guidance Memorandum](#) which provided exemptions to public reporting in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. This Guidance Memorandum granted an exemption to the HQRP reporting requirements for Q4 2019, Q1 2020, and Q2 2020. Due to these

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exemptions to the HQRP data submission requirements, CMS froze public reporting of hospices' data after the November 2020 refresh. This means that following the November 2020 refresh, **the data publicly reported is held constant (i.e., froze the data) through the November 2021 refresh.** Further, no new Provider Preview Reports will be issued for those refreshes that continue to display the constant or frozen data.

Although public reporting data was frozen during the 2021, reporting requirements remain in effect. Please visit the [HQRP Key Dates for Providers](#) webpage to view HIS and CAHPS-specific Data Correction Deadlines in 2021.

### **Public Reporting Dates with New Data Starts February 2022**

CMS will resume public reporting of HQRP data with the February 2022 refresh period on Care Compare. For the February 2022 refresh, CMS finalized plans for resuming publicly reporting data, while excluding Q1 and Q2 of 2020:

- CMS will use fewer quarters than usual to report HIS measures—specifically using Q3 2020, Q4 2020, and Q1 2021 only.
- CMS will use the most recent eight quarters of data, excluding Q1 2020 and Q2 2020, for CAHPS® Hospice Survey measures.

To learn more, please read the [FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule](#). We also will be posting a Second Edition of the Hospice Public Reporting Tip Sheet that explains public reporting starting in February 2022 with fewer than the standard quarters of data and including the two new claims-based measures. Please look for the announcement of this Second Edition of the Hospice Public Reporting Tip Sheet on the [HQRP Announcements and Spotlight](#) webpage.

The next Provider Preview Report will be issued in December 2021, in advance of the February 2022 Hospice refresh.

## **Section 4: Other Updates, Announcements, and Resources**

To stay informed about compliance with the HQRP Requirements, read the Hospice Final Rule and the materials offered on the [Hospice Center](#), [HQRP Announcements and Spotlight](#) webpage, [HQRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) webpage, [Training and Education Library](#) webpage, and [Reconsideration Requests](#) webpage. To stay informed about HQRP updates, subscribe to the [Post-Acute Care listserv](#).

### **Educational Events and Trainings**

#### **HQRP Forum – August 2021**

On August 4, CMS hosted a webinar providing details related to the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule. Materials from this webinar are available on the [Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage.

#### **Webinar – The FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule: What Hospices Need to Know!**

On August 31, CMS hosted an informational webinar helping providers prepare for the October 1, 2021 implementation of the HQRP requirements finalized in the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule. Materials from this webinar are available on the [HQRP Training and Education Library](#) webpage.

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## New and Updated Resources

### New Quality Measure (QM) Manual

The *new* HQRP QM User's Manual v1.00, and updated Current Measures documents are now available. These documents reflect quality measure changes finalized in the FY 2022 Hospice Wage Index and Payment Update Final Rule, which was published on August 4, 2021. Among other changes, v1.00 of the *New* QM Manual includes two new claims-based measures finalized in the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule: the Hospice Care Index (HCI) and Hospice Visits in the Last Days of Life (HVLDL).

The documents are available in the **Downloads** section of the [Current Measures](#) webpage.

## Section 5: What's New in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2021

For updates about new resources or changes to the schedule, please check out the CMS website and sign up for the post-acute care ListServ, ODFs, and the MLN Weekly Newsletter on the HQRP website at: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/index.html>.

### Home Health, Hospice, & DME Open Door Forums (ODFs)

The next ODFs for the HQRP are scheduled for the following dates at 2 PM EST:

- November 3
- December 15

### HQRP Forums

#### October 2021

On October 19, 2021, we will hold an HQRP Forum focused on the new HQRP QM User's Manual v1.00 and QM reports.

#### December 2021

In December 2021, we will hold another HQRP Forum.

[Please sign-up for List Servs](#) to be sure you get notified of these learning opportunities and check the [HQRP Announcements and Spotlight](#) webpage for further announcements.

## Section 6: Questions and Answers

*Q: When will hospice providers have access to their HCI and HVLDL data?*

- As of September 15, 2021, confidential QM reports became available in the Certification and Survey Provider Enhanced Reports (CASPER) to include measure scores for the HCI and HVLDL claims-based measures. These QM Reports include hospice and national rates for HVLDL and the overall HCI score. HCI also include details about the ten individual indicators used to calculate the overall HCI score, (numerator, denominator) and the national percentile. The claims-based

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measures will also be included in the Provider Preview Reports three months before they are publicly reported, which is no sooner than May 2022.

*Q: What time periods of data will be used to calculate the new claims-based HCI and HVLDL?*

- If the claims-based measures are released in May 2022, the measure reporting period will include Quarters 2, 3, and 4 of 2019, Quarter 3 and 4 of 2020, and Quarters 1, 2, and 3 of 2021. Note that these eight quarters of claims data exclude Q1 and Q2 of 2020 data.

*Q: What is the data source for the 10 indicators included in the new HCI claims-based measure?*

- The data source for the 10 indicators included in the new HCI claims-based measure is Medicare claims. Each individual indicator uses specific billing codes included in the claims. We encourage you to review the details in the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule by visiting the [Hospice Center](#). We also recommend you visit the CMS HQRP website, and monitor the Announcement and Spotlight page for notifications about the current measures on the [HQRP Current Measures](#) page and the *new* QM User's Manual v1.00 found in the Downloads section.

*Q: Can you please clarify when a newly certified hospice agency needs to begin HIS reporting?*

- Providers are required to begin reporting data on the date on the letter head of their CCN notification letter. The CCN number is your CMS Certification Number, or your facility ID. Please see [FY 2016 Hospice Final Rule \(80 FR 47142\)](#) for information on this topic. To establish your hospice to report for the Hospice Quality Reporting Program, we recommend you establish your account in the QIES (please see [CMSNet Online Registration](#)), review the [CMS HQRP](#) website, and specifically look at the [HQRP Requirements and Best Practices](#) webpage. You will find many useful documents for new and current providers at the bottom of the page under Provider Toolkit.

*Q: How will CAHPS® Hospice Star Ratings be calculated? What data will be used to calculate the star ratings?*

- As described in the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule, Star Ratings will be calculated based on “top-box” scores for each of the eight CAHPS® Hospice Survey measures. A summary CAHPS® Hospice Survey Star will be calculated for each hospice by averaging the Star Ratings across the 8 measures. Only the summary CAHPS® Star Rating will be publicly reported.
- CMS plans to review the methodology that was finalized in the FY 2022 Hospice Final Rule this fall at one of the Home Health, Hospice, and Durable Medical Equipment Open Door Forums. Monitor the CMS HQRP website for an announcement.
- For additional information about CAHPS® contact one of the CAHPS® Hospice Survey Help Desks listed below:

For technical assistance, contact the CAHPS® Hospice Survey Project Team:  
[hospiceCAHPSsurvey@hsag.com](mailto:hospiceCAHPSsurvey@hsag.com) or 1-844-472-4621

To communicate with CMS staff about CAHPS® Hospice Survey implementation issues:  
[hospicesurvey@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:hospicesurvey@cms.hhs.gov).