Introducing esMD to Providers, Review Contractors, and Health Information Handlers

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Center for Program Integrity (CPI)
Provider Compliance Group (PCG)
Need for Additional Documentation

- Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) Program makes billions of dollars in estimated improper payments.
- CMS employs several types of Review Contractors (RCs) to measure, prevent, identify, and correct these improper payments.
- RCs find improper payments by selecting a small sample of claims, requesting and reviewing medical documentation from the provider.
- RCs request medical documentation by sending a paper letter to the provider - Additional Documentation Request (ADR).
- Provider responds with the appropriate documentation – ADR response via Mail/Fax.
- esMD (Electronic Submission of Medical Documentation) was introduced as a secure electronic communication channel for the exchange of supporting documentation between the Providers and RCs.
Pre-esMD Documents Exchange Process

Provider

Review Contractor

Document Request Letter

Paper Medical Record
esMD Phases

Phase 1: Document Request Letter
  - Request Letter
  - Went live Sept 15, 2011

Phase 2: Electronic
  - Electronic
  - Went live March 23, 2020
esMD Overview

- Electronic Submission of Medical Documentation (esMD) provides a secure and electronic channel for this exchange between the Provider community and RCs

- Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) providers and suppliers can send the following via esMD
  - Responses to Additional Documentation Requests (ADRs)
  - First and second level appeal requests
  - RAC and DME discussion requests
  - Advanced Determination of Medicare Coverage (ADMC) requests
  - Unsolicited claim related documentation
  - Prior Authorization (PA) requests along with supporting documentation

- Medicare FFS providers and suppliers can receive
  - Prior Authorization Responses
  - Electronic Medical Documentation Request (eMDR)
esMD Overview

- esMD system comprises of a CONNECT Gateway which is capable of exchanging documents with other Connect compatible gateways.

- Health Information Handlers (HIHs) are organizations that develop and maintain such CONNECT compatible gateways to facilitate exchange of documents between the Providers and CMS.

- Providers can exchange transactions with esMD either by becoming an HIH themselves or by using the services of an HIH.
Benefits of using esMD

Review Contractors conduct Improper Payment Reviews to identify, correct and prevent improper payments by selecting a small sample of claims to verify provider’s compliance with Medicare rules. esMD enables Providers to submit requested documentation electronically and benefits them as below:

- **Quicker turnaround**
  - Providers have reported the payment turnaround when using esMD is 6 days as opposed to the paper process which is approximately 3 weeks.

- **Reduced labor costs**
  - esMD helps to reduce the amount of labor required to fulfill these requests, by no longer having to print and mail paper, feed a fax machine or burn CD’s.

- **Reduced hard costs**
  - esMD can also reduce hard costs like shipping and handling expenses.
Health Information Handlers (HIHs) are organizations that develop and maintain Connect compatible gateways to facilitate exchange of documents between the Providers and CMS.
Providers who want to submit via esMD

• **STEP 1:**
  Find out if your Review Contractors accept esMD (Slide 11 and 12 have the names of the RCs).

• **STEP 2:**
  Submit documentation to esMD by building your own gateway or by using the services of the sponsored HIH. (Slide 10 has the names of the HIHs).

**Note:** For more information, visit

### HIHs using esMD

#### CMS Certified esMD HIHs

- ABILITY Network/IVANS
- Bluemark, LLC
- ChartFast
- CIOX Health
- Cobius
- Synergy Health Services (formerly Consulate Healthcare)
- Craneware, Inc.
- Waystar (formerly eSolutions, Inc.)
- MedFORCE Technologies
- MRO
- SSI
- SunCoast RHIO, Inc.
- UPMC
- Vyne Medical

**Note:** HIHs are not funded by CMS.

For an updated list, visit: [www.cms.gov/esMD](http://www.cms.gov/esMD)
## RCs accepting via esMD

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<td>MAC JN (First Coast Service Options)</td>
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## RCs accepting via esMD

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HIH Gateway services

A Health Information Handler (HIH) is any company that handles health information on behalf of the Provider(s). Examples include:

- **Health Information Exchange (HIE)/Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO)**
- **Release of Information (ROI) Vendor** A company that manages the release of information for providers. Their services may include logging and tracking the request, retrieving the patient record from multiple locations in multiple formats, identifying the information needed to fulfill the request, requesting additional authorization, if needed, packaging and mailing.
- **Electronic Health Record (EHR) Vendor**
- **Claim Clearinghouse**
- **Health Internet Service Provider (HISP)** An entity that provides services that enable providers or health organizations to exchange health information using the internet.
How can an Organization become an HIH?

- Complete the esMD HIH Agreement with CMS.
- Ensure that appropriate Business Associate Agreements are in place with your Providers.
  - **Option 1**
    - Contact CMS Business Owner for more details.
  - **Option 2**
    - Contact RIOC team ([rioc@mettles.com](mailto:rioc@mettles.com)) to follow the steps to install, configure, and test using their own instance of the RIOC gateway software.
RIOC Project

• **Reference Implementation and Outreach Coordinator (RIOC) Project**

• **Provides RIOC Gateway as an out-of-the-box implementation of a CONNECT compatible gateway Software for HIHs to use**

• **Expectation is that**
  
  • A current or potential HIH will install their own instance of RIOC Gateway in their test environment
  
  • Integrate the Gateway into their existing workflows and/or applications
  
  • Configure and test with esMD
  
  • Move to production with their instance of the RIOC Gateway
Contact Information

CMS Business Owner: esMDBusinessOwners@cms.hhs.gov

CMS esMD Website: www.cms.gov/esMD

CONNECT Website: http://www.connectopensource.org

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