

CENTER FOR MEDICARE

DATE: August 16, 2010

TO: Medicare Advantage and Part D Quality Contacts and Medicare Compliance Officers

FROM: Cynthia G. Tudor, Ph.D., Director
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SUBJECT: Update on the Plan Rating System and Plan Finder Tool

In the fall of 2010, CMS will be displaying the 2011 Part C and D plan ratings on the new Plan Finder Tool on www.medicare.gov to help people with Medicare make more informed decisions about their health and drug plans. The new tool combines Medicare Options Compare and the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder into a single tool with enhanced filtering and comparison capabilities. An “Overall Plan Rating” will display the highest level summary score available for each plan type. For MA-PD plans, this means there will be a summary score that combines health and drug plan ratings.

As part of the plan ratings, CMS will continue to display the health and drug plan summary level ratings and to offer drill-downs for different categories and individual measures. One additional notation also will be used. Plans will receive a “consistently low performer” notation when their health and/or drug plan summary ratings fall under 3 stars for at least 3 consecutive years. The icon displayed in Fall 2010 as part of the 2011 plan ratings would include low performance for the 2009, 2010 and 2011 plan ratings. That is, contracts achieving only an overall rating of “fair” or “poor” in each of the last three years will have an icon next to their contract name. Above the plan ratings displays, a legend for this “consistently low performer” plan icon will read as follows:

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|  | Caution: For three years in a row, the Medicare program has given this plan a low <i>overall</i> rating. If you are considering enrolling in this plan, look closely at the detailed ratings for this plan. |
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In our efforts to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries receive the best health care available, CMS will monitor consistently low performing plans carefully during the coming year. These plans are also advised to participate in targeted, specialized MA quality improvement projects. Clearly noting on the plan finder web tool which plans are

consistently poor performers is one more way CMS's plan ratings system provides beneficiaries with easy access to information they need to make an informed choices about their health and drug plans.

If you have questions about this memorandum, please email PartCRatings@cms.hhs.gov.