



## **CENTER FOR MEDICARE**

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**TO:** All Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAOs), Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) Sponsors, and Medicare-Medicaid Plans (MMPs)

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**SUBJECT:** Updates to COVID-19 Sharing Projects

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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent declaration of a public health emergency (PHE), to facilitate COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX) uptake, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began processing all claims for payment for COVAX administration for the vast majority of Medicare beneficiaries<sup>1</sup> through the original fee-for-service (FFS) Medicare program. For Calendar Years 2020 and 2021, this included claims for COVAX administration for Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare Advantage (MA) Plans (including Local Coordinated Care Plans (CCPs), and Regional CCPs as well as other plan types), Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs) and Medicare-Medicaid Plans (MMPs), collectively referred to in this memorandum as “plans.” While none of these plans were responsible for making payments for vaccine administration during that time, CMS encouraged these plans to help ensure their enrollees received an initial COVAX dose when available to them, as well as any additional dose(s) per clinical recommendations. In order to assist with these efforts, in January 2021, CMS launched the COVAX data sharing project, which initiated a process by which plans could request certain COVAX data from CMS regarding their enrollees. These data have been provided via the ABII-COVAX Web Portal, hosted by CMS’s contractor, Acumen, LLC (Acumen).<sup>2</sup>

Currently, to produce the reports provided through the ABII-COVAX Web Portal, Acumen uses data from the Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs), the Integrated Data Repository (IDR), Shared Systems Data (SSD), and pharmacy-based National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) B transactions from another CMS contractor, RelayHealth.

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<sup>1</sup> As explained in the Interim Final Rule “Additional Policy and Regulatory Revisions in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” (CMS-9912-IFC), which appeared in the Federal Register on November 6, 2020, enrollees in Section 1876 Cost Plans will be covered for COVAX administration by the Section 1876 Cost Plan when COVAX is administered in-network. 85 FR 71142, 71148.

<sup>2</sup> The plans were able to request the COVAX data for their health care operations such as case management, care coordination, or population-based activities to improve the health of their enrollees. Please see our January 7, 2021 Health Plan Management System (HPMS) memo titled “Access to COVID-19 Vaccine Data for Parts C & D Enrollees,” available at

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-access-covid-19-vaccine-data-parts-c-d-enrollees.pdf>.

Beginning January 1, 2022, MA plans were required to cover COVAX administration for their enrollees, and the FFS Medicare program will not pay such claims. Because plans will be billed by National Drug Code (NDC), MA plans now have COVAX administration data for their enrollees for any COVAX doses administered on January 1, 2022 or later. Additionally, as the PHE has gone on, and because a significant portion of Medicare beneficiaries received COVID-19 vaccines through mass vaccination clinics, the large surges of Medicare beneficiaries requesting COVID-19 vaccines through Medicare FFS or plans have greatly diminished.

Although we anticipate that plans that: (1) receive new enrollees switching from other plans during open enrollment or other times of the year; or (2) use these data for enrollee outreach activities will continue to benefit from access to COVAX data, there is no longer a need to collect these data on a near-real-time basis. Consequently, effective **July 1, 2022**, the COVAX data sharing projects will implement the following changes:

- **Source of Data Provided in ABII-COVAX.** New NCPDP pharmacy data will not be used to generate the COVID-19 Vaccinated Beneficiaries Report provided through the ABII-COVAX Web Portal. Medicare Shared Systems Data (SSD) will be the sole data source used to generate the COVID-19 Vaccinated Beneficiaries Report. Since these reports present cumulative observations, they will continue to include historical NCPDP data received through June 30, 2022. Please note that only historical NCPDP data received through June 30, 2022 will be included in the COVID-19 Vaccinated Beneficiaries Reports shared via the ABII-COVAX Web Portal.
- **Direct Data Feeds from RelayHealth.** Plans will no longer be able to request or receive NCPDP pharmacy data directly from RelayHealth. Plans currently receiving such data that wish to continue to receive data via the ABII-COVAX Web Portal should refer to our January 28, 2022 HPMS memorandum titled “Continuation of COVID-19 Sharing Project in CY 2022” available at <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/memovaccinatedatashare012822.pdf>.

CMS will continue to provide the requested reports via the ABII-COVAX Web Portal on a weekly basis until the end of the COVID-19 PHE, or until such time as a plan requests to no longer receive the data, whichever is first.

Questions about this memorandum may be sent to [PartD\\_COB@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:PartD_COB@cms.hhs.gov) and questions about the ABII-COVAX Web Portal to [COVAX-Support@acumenllc.com](mailto:COVAX-Support@acumenllc.com).